Saturday February 15 1997

Abu Dhabi D 8.50 Algeria L 220 Andorra FF 10 Austria AS 30 Bahrain BD 0.85 Belgium BF 65 Bulgaria LV 580 Canada C$ 3.95 Croatia KN 12.50 Cyprus C£ 1.00 Czech Republic KCS0 Denmark DK 15 Dubai D 8.50 Egypt E£ 6.50 Estonia K 30 Finland FM 12 France FF 10 Germany DM 3.50 Greece D 400 Hong Kong HK$ 25 Hungary F 290 Iceland IK 185 India Rs 55 Israel NIS 11.50 Italy L 3,000 Jordan JD 1.25 Kenya KSH 150 Kuwait KD 0.50 Lebanon LL 3000 Lithuania US$ 2 Luxembourg LF 55 Madeira E 270 Malta ML 0.43 Morocco D 25 Netherlands G 4.00 Norway NK 16 Oman OR 1.00 Pakistan R 60 Poland Z 6.50 Portugal E 240 Qatar QR 8.50 Russia US$ 2.75 Saudi Arabia R 10 Slovakia SK 60 Slovenia SLT 280 Spain P 230 Sweden SK 17 Switzerland SF 3.20 Thailand B 80 Tunisia TD 1.750 Turkey TL 120,000 Ukraine US$ 3.50 USA US$ 2.75

The Guardian

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,788

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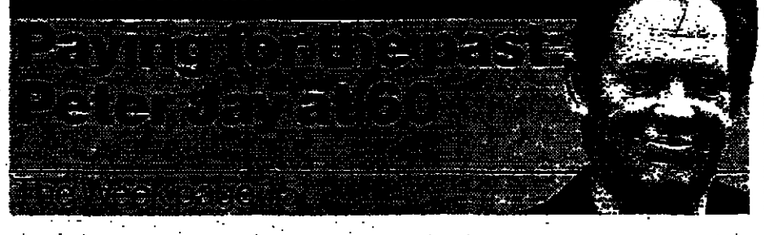
Britain's favourite radio station

Joanna Coles interview



Arts

Clarke fury as loopholes undermine public spending strategy

£3bn Whitehall tax dodge

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is embroiled in an extraordinary row with Cabinet colleagues over their departments' attempts to avoid paying to the Treasury an estimated £3 billion a year in taxes, equivalent to 2p in the pound off income tax.

Mr Clarke has written a typically trenchant warning to his colleagues that government departments are engaging in widespread tax avoidance measures. He is incensed at the moves because he has made closing tax loopholes a cornerstone of his Budget strategy. Disclosure of the letter is likely to be received with glee on the opposition benches.

Whitehall ministries are bringing in private consultants to teach them how to set up legal multi-million pound tax avoidance schemes, Mr Clarke says in the letter. Some of the savings are paying the fees or salaries of consultants, he adds. Senior tax consultants charge an average of £300 per hour, although fees can reach £500 per hour.

Whitehall sources told the Guardian that the tax avoidance problem had accelerated since the Government's decision to create more than 100 agencies, bringing in businessmen to run them, and allowing ministries much greater freedom to run their own affairs.

Mr Clarke's robustly worded letter says the problem is so serious that it has undermined the public spending round exercise and deprived the Inland Revenue and Customs & Excise of billions of pounds.

The letter — officially sent to Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, and copied to all spending ministers and the Prime Minister — reads: "It cannot be right to spend public money on reducing department's tax liabilities where there are not sufficient real-world efficiency gains to justify such activity.

"Tax advice should not be used simply to increase departmental resources by the back door, circumventing the normal public expenditure survey process, and reducing the Exchequer's tax receipts at the cost to the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement."

The letter continues: "Such activity skews the distribution of public funds between departments and, by redirecting effort, weakens the incentive to make genuine efficiency gains. At the aggregate level, the effect on the public finances is simply to drain resources in order to pay the fees or salaries of those who provide the advice.

"As you know the fight against tax avoidance and evasion was a key Budget theme ... Increased aggressive tax management by departments sits badly with this. If tax management becomes a prominent part of departments' business, we risk accusations that we are pursuing a policy of 'do as we say, not as we do' on tax avoidance."

Tax consultants say there is a huge range of legitimate tax avoidance schemes that government agencies and the NHS are entitled to employ. These include:

☐ Avoidance of VAT by claiming back hundreds of millions of pounds spent by NHS trusts. The biggest claims can be made on medical equipment, drugs and huge building projects. Customs & Excise said last night that £146 million was returned to trusts last year.

☐ Introduction of tax efficient employee incentives to avoid paying National Insurance by establishing car leasing schemes for staff.

☐ Opening up staff canteens to the general public so that tax claims can be made against their use.

☐ Changing pension payment systems to qualify for tax relief, to save on staff costs.

Last night Alan Milburn, a senior Labour Treasury spokesman, said: "It is quite wrong to use public money to avoid paying tax. This is hypocrisy of the most grotesque order. Kenneth Clarke's letter makes it clear that he has failed to control Whitehall's revenues and this is costing taxpayers dear."

Maurice Fitzpatrick, a senior adviser with Chantrey Vellacott, corporate tax consultants, said: "The advice being offered to ministries is perfectly legitimate. It is exactly the same advice that would be offered to private companies on how to be tax efficient. There is nothing wrong with this."

Customs & Excise was yesterday trying to play down the impact of Mr Clarke's letter, but Whitehall sources say there is no way the Chancellor would issue such a letter if a significant sum of public cash was not at risk.

A young tompot blenny is protected by a test tube from being eaten by its mother at Hastings Sea Life Centre. The youngster is one of the first brood of the species to be reared successfully in captivity PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER

Fudge over Bosnia flashpoint

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

THE impotence of international mediators in Bosnia was illustrated starkly for the second time in a week yesterday when they fudged a key decision between rival Serb and Muslim claims to one of the most explosive flashpoints, the town of Brcko.

Faced with the threat of violence from both sides, the main American arbiter, Roberts Owen, put off for a year the ruling on who will control the strategic north-eastern town, and in the meantime placed it under international supervision.

"It's definitely enough to avoid war," said the United States special envoy to the Balkans, John Kornblum.

Nato's stabilisation force in Bosnia, S-For, had concentrated its forces around the town in the run-up to yesterday's deadline for the decision, in expectation of serious trouble after rumours that the Serbs would be awarded the town.

The fudge highlighted how little headway has been made by international forces and mediators against the ethnic divisions seared deep into Bosnia by the war, despite the £650 million spent in the past year on the international effort to bring a settled peace to the republic.

On Monday and Tuesday more than 100 elderly Muslims were purged from the Croat-controlled sector of the southern city of Mostar as peacekeeping troops stood by and unarmed international police disappeared into barracks.

Outlining the decision — or lack of one — on Brcko at a press conference in Rome yesterday, Mr Owen, the American lawyer who chaired the all-party arbitration tribunal on the Bosnian town, said that "no winner is being awarded today".

Western diplomats hope to give Brcko's supervisor a better chance to reverse ethnic cleansing by giving him more executive powers, and the ultimate sanction of recommending who will win control over the town when a final

turn to page 2, column 3

On Monday

Tony Blair's closest adviser, Alastair Campbell, speaks frankly and for the first time about Labour's media strategy for the election, the Clare Short saga, the power of the Sun, the BBC's political coverage, and, of course, the Guardian and why it annoys him. In Monday's G2, the unrivalled tabloid section

Jacko jnr wakes up to bidding war for baby pictures

Clare Longrigg

MICHAEL Jackson (jnr), as he is expected to be called, woke up without mum yesterday and with a bounty on his day-old head. Bidding for the first photographs of proud dad and boy together is starting at around £350,000.

Mum seems unlikely to feature in many family snaps. Debbie Rowe, aged 37, the second wife of Michael Jackson (snr), is said to have been paid more than £1 million to sign away her custody rights. As the two Michaels woke up at his Neverland ranch, she was recovering at a hotel.

The Jackson family is unlikely to be nuclear. It is certain to be unorthodox.

There are even suggestions the marriage was a vehicle of convenience for Jackson, aged 38, to achieve his wish of fatherhood. His spokesman denies Ms Rowe was artificially inseminated, and there were reports of DNA tests to ensure he was the dad.

But he was gushing yesterday about his 7lb 10oz bundle of joy. "Words can't describe how I feel. I have been blessed beyond comprehension and I will work tirelessly at being the best father that I can possibly be.

Michael Jackson and Debbie Rowe at their wedding last year

"I appreciate that my fans are elated, but I hope that everyone respects the privacy that Debbie and I want and need for our son."

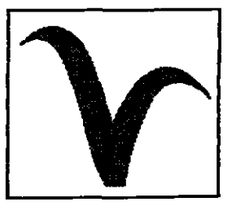
So desperate is he to secrete his child from the media gaze — those expensive photos notwithstanding — Jackson is said to be considering applying for British citizenship. Reports abound that he wants to move to Scotland, perhaps to raise his boy in a castle. Cash-strapped lairds must be rubbing their hands.

Jackson was spotted at the luxury Cameron House hotel at Loch Lomond last month, and he was said to be looking at stately homes in the Borders.

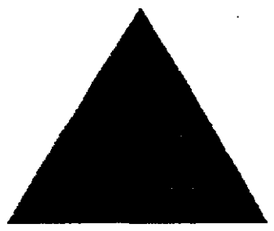
Jackson married Ms Rowe, aged 37, in November, less than a year after he divorced Lisa Marie Presley, daughter of Elvis. Ms Rowe was already six months pregnant.

Jackson's official biographer, J. Randy Taraborelli, said yesterday: "They have not proclaimed undying love, they have an arrangement as friends. If she wants part of that arrangement to be involved in rearing the child, he will probably allow it. Someone's going to have to do it."

Mr Taraborelli explained why Scotland might be the place for the Jacksons. "In Europe a good scandal can make you a bigger star. In America it can really ruin you. Michael, who I think foresees lots of scandals in his future, would just as soon be in Europe where they can do him some good."



Suitable for vegetarians.



Unsuitable for big girls' blouses.

Bass BEST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777

Inside

Britain

World News

Finance

Sport

St Helens and Wigan are seeking legal advice after they were each fined £15,000 for last week's brawl. The Week 20

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Halifax cuts cost of loans

Cheaper fixed-rate mortgages suggest recovery exaggerated

Richard Miles

BRITAIN'S biggest mortgage lender, the Halifax, is to cut the cost of fixed-rate borrowing, three months after increasing rates because it feared a return to a 1980s-style housing boom.

In a volte-face seemingly motivated by commercial interests — brokers say the Halifax has lost market share in the past year — the society yesterday announced deep cuts in the cost of some its most popular home-loan packages.

The move is a clear signal to homebuyers that the strength of the recovery in the housing market may have been exaggerated. Property prices have risen over the past year but sales have remained flat and are still far below their 1980s peak.

Three months ago, the Halifax raised the cost of all fixed-rate and discounted mortgages, claiming there was a real danger of a return to the boom-bust cycle, which left hundreds of thousands of borrowers in homes worth less than their mortgages.

At the time Halifax's chief executive, Mike Blackburn, said the new rates were positioned at a "sensible level to avoid over-stimulation of the market. This should be the position of any responsible lender to ensure the boom-bust cycle of the late 1980s and early 1990s is avoided."

The Halifax now appears to have backtracked on this view of the market. Yesterday the society, which arranges loans for one in four borrowers, said the latest rate cuts were aimed at borrowers wanting to fix their mortgages in the run-up to the election.

Its new rates, which come into force from Monday, will see the interest on a five-year fixed mortgage fall from 8.45 to 7.65 per cent. Two- and three-year fixes have also been cut to 6.45 per cent and 6.90 per cent, down by nearly one point.

Director John Miller said: "At a time when the debate between the Government and the Bank of England regarding interest rate rises continues, Halifax has taken the initiative by introducing a range of fixed-rate products that guarantees our customers a level of certainty over their mortgage payments."

Mortgage brokers said cheaper wholesale money had made the reductions possible, but hinted that the Halifax was seeking to win back market share. Earlier this week, Cheltenham & Gloucester claimed to be the single largest lender of new home loans.

Many of the other lenders, including Abbey National and Alliance & Leicester, have already trimmed their fixed rates. Even with the latest cuts, the Halifax's products remained fairly uncompetitive, said Simon Tyler of broker Chase de Vere. "This is certainly good news for borrowers, but the Halifax is still more expensive than other lenders," he said.

Evidence is mounting that the recovery in the housing market is not as strong as first supposed. Most lenders have forecast prices will rise by about 7 per cent in 1997. Nikko, an investment bank, said prices were 30 per cent lower in real terms than in the 1980s.

This picture was confirmed by Andrew Longhurst, C&G chairman designate. He pointed out that housing transactions were still 44 per cent below their peak. Prices have risen in some sought-after areas because the stock of available housing was so small. In other areas, prices have shown little movement.

Major claims Labour plans for constitutional reform would bring about the disintegration of Britain

Tories' nerves start to fray

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Government showed signs of frayed pre-election nerves last night in spite of a confident John Major speech attacking Labour's devolution plans for Scotland and Wales.

With the start of the general election campaign only seven weeks away at the most, Mr Major chose for his battleground one of the three issues he believes Labour is weakest on, constitutional reform.

In a speech to the Welsh Tory conference, he claimed that Labour's proposals would see the disintegration of Britain. "Once you set Wales against the North-East of England, Scotland against Wales, the South-West against the Marches, the strength of Britain will be sapped, our national purpose undermined," he said.

In contrast to Mr Major's speech, government whips gave off a whiff of panic over Monday's vote to cut Agriculture Minister Douglas Hogg's salary by £1,000 for his handling of the beef crisis. Both sides are pulling back all MPs, including those abroad or sick.

Although the Government is on course to defeat the Labour motion, it failed yesterday to put down an amendment of its own in support of Mr Hogg, which would have been normal procedure. Labour said the failure to do so was unprecedented and it revealed that while Tory MPs would vote against the Labour motion, the Government could not rely on all of them being prepared to go through the same lobbies to support Mr Hogg, who is extremely unpopular.

A Tory spokesman insisted there would be no counter motion because "this disgraceful political stunt is going to be treated with the absolute contempt it deserves".

Mr Major, who will follow up yesterday's speech on Thursday when he opens a government debate on the constitution, told the Welsh conference that the electorate faced a choice between the Conservatives, who could be relied upon to adopt an evolutionary approach to the constitution, and Labour, which would "take a hammer and chisel" to it.

The Prime Minister, who has been briefed heavily by the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, listed 11 questions on Labour's constitutional plans that he would be seeking answers to, such as whether Labour would reduce the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster and whether a Welsh Assembly would eventually have tax-raising powers. "After 18 years of planning, their policy is peppered with so many holes it makes a sieve look watertight," he said.

Mr Major continued to tease yesterday over the election date. March 20 looks increasingly unlikely, leaving either April 10 or May 1. The Conservatives intend campaigning primarily on three issues: the constitution, into which they will weave Europe; competition in education; and, above all else, the economy.

They will attack what they claim is a Labour vision of a "Europe of the regions", which would consist of smaller units, such as England, Scotland, Bavaria and Catalonia. They will also save up an attack on the number of Scots who would be prominent in a Labour government. One senior Tory last night described Gordon Brown, Robin Cook and Donald Dewar as "the West Lothian Question on legs", a reference to the argument about whether Scots should be allowed to vote on English affairs if a Scottish parliament is established.

But Mr Blair is said to be relaxed about the debate moving on to the constitution. While Mr Major will concentrate on Scotland and Wales on Thursday, Mr Blair is likely to press him on reform of the Lords, especially hereditary peers, who are regarded by Labour as indefensible.

Behind the scenes, Labour is well advanced with its devolution plans, with a referendum for Scotland and Wales pencilled in for September, though this could slip to October or November. Labour is also close to agreement with the Liberal Democrats on a joint approach to constitutional reform, to be announced in the next few weeks.

A referendum on the introduction of proportional representation will be promised for the first parliament.

Mr Cook, in a speech today to the Dutch Labour Party in The Hague, will confirm the extent of Labour's planned reforms and put them in the context of last year's Scott report into the arms-for-Iraq inquiry, arguing that open government is needed to avoid a repetition. He will say that the most terrifying prospect of a fifth Tory term would be to see "Britain slide further into the culture of a one-party state".

Peacemakers fudge on key town

continued from page 1

decision is made in March 1998.

But the existing police, local council and courts are Serb and have shown themselves determined to obstruct reintegration at any cost. Many Muslim houses in the area have been dynamited, but the perpetrators have never been caught. Economic inducements to co-operate have had little effect.

The Brcko supervisor — due to start work by March 15 — will have control over a reinforced contingent of United Nations police monitors, but they will be unarmed.

S-For is supposed to co-operate with the supervisor, but has so far been reluctant to involve itself in civil disputes — as the Mostar pogrom showed.

It is unclear whether Nato would allow its troops to come to the supervisor's assistance in removing a recalcitrant Serb police chief, for example.

The international community's high representative in Bosnia, Carl Bildt, yesterday described the supervision plan as an attempt to strike a balance in "the mother of all difficulties in the Bosnian peace process".

He said he would appoint a deputy to act as the supervisor, and is expected to nominate an American.

Would-be candidates may need some coaxing to accept the job. The supervisor's powers have yet to be clearly defined.

The Bosnian Serbs, who seized and ethnically cleansed Brcko at the beginning of the war in 1992, have repeatedly threatened to go to war to keep possession of the town. The port on the River Sava lies at one end of a land corridor linking the two halves of Serb territory.

The town is also coveted by the Muslim-Croat federation as a gateway to western Europe.

Whoever is chosen to run the town will have one important weapon in their armoury. According to yesterday's judgment, the final decision on Brcko's future would depend on each side's compliance in the interim period.

Mr Owen said Brcko could become a special self-governing district "along the lines of Washington DC".

Alija Izetbegovic, the Muslim leader and chairman of Bosnia's three-man presidency, had threatened to resign if Brcko was not awarded to the Muslim-Croat federation.

In recent days, Muslim refugees from Brcko had been gathering near the town threatening violent protests if it remained in Serb hands.

Spirit of the Dead lives on

Review

Garth Cartwright

Phish
Empire, Shepherd's Bush

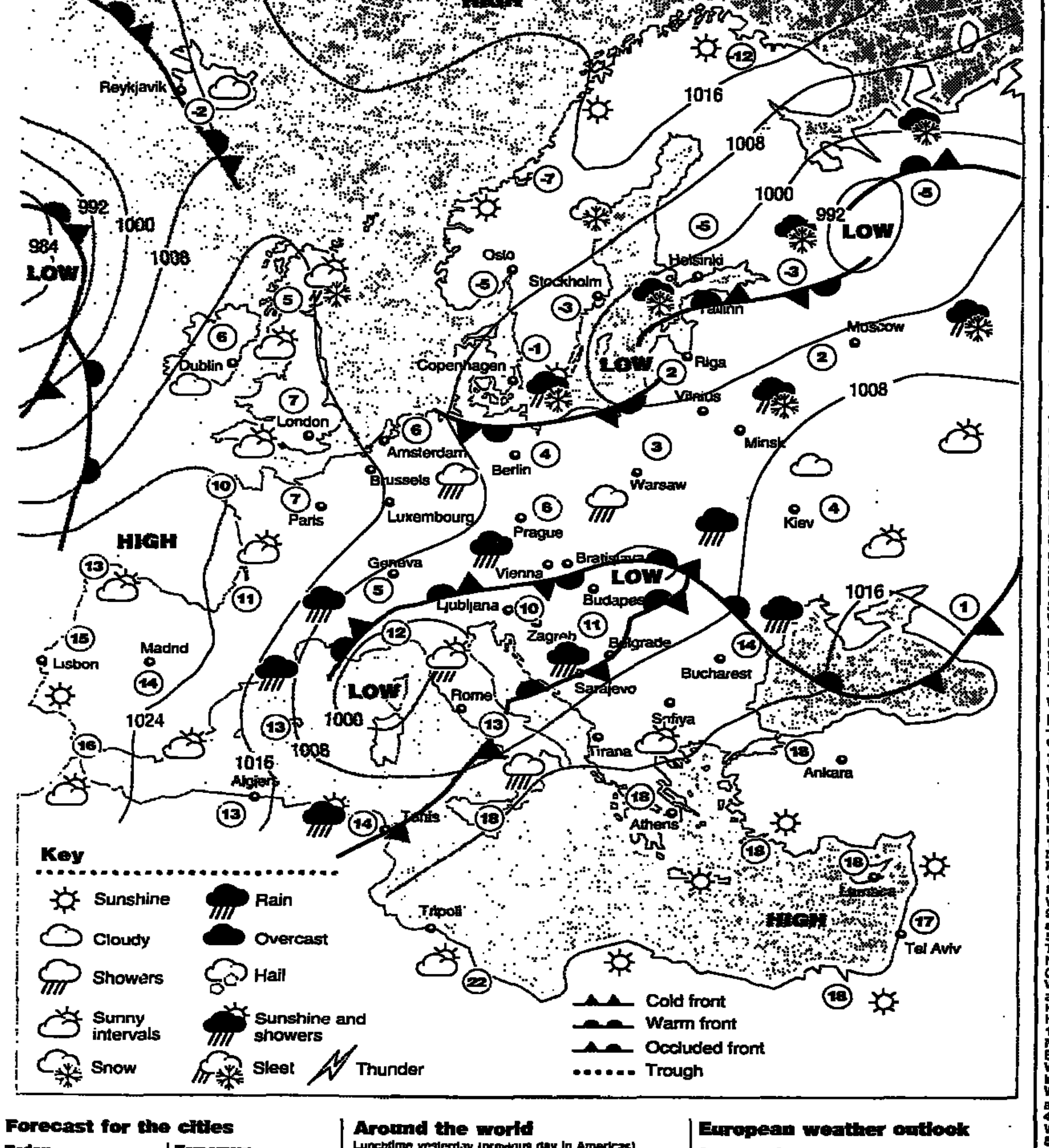
THE highest-grossing American festival of 1996 saw 135,000 people attend a three-day event featuring one band, Phish. Almost unknown in Britain and relying on the Internet in the US, with no videos, hit singles or multi-platinum albums, an abhorrence of media hype and industry hard sell, Phish are the true inheritors of The Grateful Dead's mantle.

Playing a musical brew that lasts for hours, continually criss-crossing the States and encouraging fans to see themselves as Phishheads, they have built upon and extended The Dead's fanatical family aura.

After three hours their audience was still going strong. Phish's lyrical, engaging boogie tapping into that part of the subconscious that wishes the 1960s never ended. They lack the haunted nature of The Dead, or Santana's inspired virtuosity, but for good-natured, open-ended, psychedelic country-jazz-rock Phish are masters in a field of one.

The US had already fallen under their spell but they may well prove highly resistible to European cynicism.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	13	5	Sh
Amsterdam	0	-1	Sl
Athens	18	8	S
Berlin	4	-1	Sl
Bonn	6	-1	Sh
Brussels	7	-2	F
Copenhagen	0	-5	Sn
Crete	10	10	S
Geneva	5	-2	Sl
Larnaca	13	8	S
London	7	1	F
Madrid	14	2	S
Milan	9	4	R
Nice	12	4	R
Oslo	-4	-11	S
Paris	7	-2	F
Rome	14	10	R
Stockholm	-3	-8	Sn
Tunis	15	7	Sh
Vienna	0	0	R

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	17	6	S
Amsterdam	6	0	F
Athens	10	10	R
Berlin	5	-2	S
Bonn	6	-1	S
Brussels	7	2	F
Copenhagen	5	0	S
Crete	17	10	R
Geneva	5	-1	S
Larnaca	18	7	S
London	8	5	R
Madrid	10	4	Sh
Milan	6	-1	S
Nice	11	5	S
Oslo	-3	-8	S
Paris	10	5	R
Rome	13	5	S
Stockholm	-3	-7	F
Tunis	18	6	S
Vienna	5	-2	S

Monday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	7	S
Amsterdam	4	0	Sl
Athens	14	5	Sh
Berlin	2	-2	Sn
Bonn	3	0	Sl
Brussels	10	5	R
Copenhagen	-1	-1	Sn
Crete	15	8	Sh
Geneva	6	2	R
Larnaca	20	3	Sh
London	10	5	R
Madrid	13	2	F
Milan	3	4	Dr
Nice	11	8	Sh
Oslo	-4	-6	C
Paris	10	7	R
Rome	13	6	S
Stockholm	-5	-8	C
Tunis	18	4	S
Vienna	3	0	Sl

Tuesday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	7	F
Amsterdam	7	2	Sh
Athens	15	7	F
Berlin	4	2	R
Bonn	9	4	R
Brussels	9	3	Sh
Copenhagen	4	2	R
Crete	17	8	F
Geneva	8	5	R
Larnaca	21	10	F
London	8	6	Sh
Madrid	16	3	S
Milan	9	5	C
Nice	13	6	F
Oslo	0	-1	Sn
Paris	11	7	Dr
Rome	13	5	Sh
Stockholm	-1	-2	Sn
Tunis	15	5	Sh
Vienna	6	3	C

C cloudy, D clear, Dr drizzle, F fair, Fg fog, H hail, Hz haze, R rain, Sh showers, Sl sleet, Sn snow, S sunny, Th thunder, * (previous day's readings)

Around the world

Lunchtime yesterday (previous day in Americas)

		C	F			C	F
Adelaide	S	26	79	K. Lumpur	F	31	88
Amsterdam	F	6	43	Karachi	S	25	77
Anchorage	C	-1	30	Katmandu	S	18	64
Athens	S	19	66	Kiev	Dr	6	43
Atlanta	R	4	39	Kingston	F	33	91
Auckland	C	22	72	Larnaca	F	17	63
B Aires	S	27	81	Lisbon	C	15	59
Bahrain	S	15	59	London	C	5	41
Bangkok	Sh	33	91	Los Angeles	S	19	66
Barbados	F	28	82	Luxembourg	C	3	37
Barcelona	F	17	63	Madrid	C	13	55
Beirut	F	17	63	Majorca	F	19	66
Belgrade	S	9	48	Malaga	S	20	68
Berlin	F	7	45	Malta	F	17	63
Bermuda	C	27	81	Manila	F	29	84
Biarritz	F	17	63	Mecca	S	18	64
Bombay	S	32	90	Melbourne	S	26	79
Bordeaux	R	13	55	Mexico City	S	20	68
Boston	S	-2	28	Miami	F	27	81
Brisbane	F	30	86	Milan	S	15	59
Brussels	C	5	41	Moscow	C	3	37
Budapest	C	8	46	Munich	F	5	41
Cairo	F	19	66	Nairobi	S	29	84
Calgary	F	-4	25	Naples	S	16	61
Cape Town	S	30	86	New Delhi	Hz	22	72
Chicago	C	-2	28	New Orleans	S	13	55
Christchurch	S	20	68	New York	S	-1	30
Copenhagen	Sn	0	32	Nice	S	15	59
Corfu	F	18	64	Oslo	S	-11	12
Dakar	S	31	88	Paris	R	8	46
Dallas	C	5	41	Perth	S	26	79
Darwin	Th	27	81	Prague	S	4	39
Dhaka	S	26	78	Reykjavik	C	2	36
Djakarta	F	30	86	Rhodes	C	18	64
Dublin	S	5	41	Rio de Jan.	F	29	84
Florence	C	13	55	Rome	S	16	61
Frankfurt	C	6	43	Sarajevo	C	4	39
Funchal	F	16	61	Singapore	Sh	28	82
Geneva	Sh	8	46	Sydney	F	23	73
Gibraltar	F	18	64	Tel Aviv	S	18	64
Hamburg	Sh	5	41	Tenerife	S	23	73
Helsinki	S	-13	9	Tokyo	S	10	50
Hong Kong	R	14	57	Tunis	C	17	63
Honolulu	S	26	79	Venice	M	7	45
Istanbul	C	11	52	Vienna	S	8	46
Jersey	R	9	48	Warsaw	R	3	37
Jerusalem	F	12	54	Washington	F	2	36
Jo'burg	F	25	77	Wellington	S	21	70
				Zurich	Sl	2	36

European weather outlook

Scandinavia:

Low pressure over the Baltic States will bring further snow to southern Finland and central and southern Sweden, but the rest of Scandinavia should be dry with some sunshine especially along the Norwegian coast. Very cold, though, with highs ranging from -12C in Lapland to 0C in Denmark.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland:

A rather cold northerly airflow covers the region, and most places will stay cloudy today with outbreaks of showery rain although north Germany and the Netherlands should brighten up this afternoon. Heavy snow over the Alps. Highs mainly between 3 and 6C.

France:

A depression centred near Corsica will be responsible for heavy rain in the south-east, with a major snowfall over the French Alps. All other parts of the country should be bright if rather cold with sunny spells and the odd passing shower. Highs between 5 and 12C.

Spain and Portugal:

Low pressure in the Western Mediterranean will bring heavy showers and a cold north wind to the Balearics and north-east Spain. Elsewhere it should be mostly dry with sunny spells, but it will be colder than of late. Highs between 10 and 16C.

Italy:

Nearby low pressure means that today will be unsettled with outbreaks of rain, heavy in places, and some snow over the Italian Alps. Highs ranging from 9C in the north to 19C locally in the south.

Greece:

High pressure will maintain settled weather with plenty of warm sunshine in most areas, but showers are possible later today in Corfu and along the west coast of the mainland. Highs 15-19C.

Television and radio — Saturday

BBC 1

8.00am Harry And The Hendersons. 8.25 News And Weather. 8.30 Children's BBC: Felix The Cat. 8.45 Phantom 2040. 9.10 The Real Adventures Of Jonny Quest. 9.35 The Flintstones. 10.00 Live And Kicking. 1.12 Weather. 1.15 Grandstand. 6.30 News And Weather. 6.40 Regional News And Sport. 6.45 The Simpsons. 7.10 The New Adventures Of Superman. 7.50 Noel's House Party. 8.50 The National Lottery Live. 9.10 Casualty. 10.00 Screen One: Gobble. 11.15 News And Sport. 11.35 Match Of The Day: The Road To Wembley. 12.45 The Frank Skinner Show. 1.15 Top Of The Pops. 1.45 FILM: Dancers. 3.20 Weather. 3.25 Close.

BBC 2

7.20am Open University: The York Mystery Plays. 7.45 Motion: Newton's Laws. 8.10 Panel Painting. 8.35 Traps: And How To Get Out Of Them. 9.00 Open Saturday. 11.30 Michael Barry's Choice Cuts. 11.40 Arctic Fox. 12.05 Orca, King Of The Sea. 12.30 FILM: An Old Spanish Onion. 12.50 FILM: Dames. 2.20 Film 97 With Barry Norman. 2.50 FILM: Western Union. 4.25 FILM: The Last Wagon. 6.00 TOTP 2. 6.45 The Readiness Is All. 7.25 Sid Sunday Special. 7.55 News And Sport. 8.10 Correspondent. 8.55 What The Papers Say. 9.05 Branded. 9.45 Close Up. 10.00 Til Death Us Do Part. 10.30 Nostromo. 12.00 Video Fool For Love. 1.25 Windows On The World. 2.30 Global VideoBytes. 2.50 Weather. 2.55 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.15 World Weather. 7.20 Holiday Outings. 7.30 The Brollys. 7.40 Bodger and Badger. 7.55 Melvin and Maureen. 8.10 Why Don't You? 8.35 The Really Wild Guide to Britain. 9.00 Blue Peter. 9.20 Grange Hill Omnibus. 10.00 Dr Who: Death to The Daleks. 10.25 Turnabout. 10.50 A Very Peculiar Practice. 11.45 World Weather. 11.50 Take Six Cooks. 12.20 EastEnders. 1.40 Kilroy. 2.25 Turnabout. 2.50 The Sooty Show. 3.10 Bodger and Badger. 3.50 Blue Peter. 4.10 Grange Hill Omnibus. 4.35 A Very Peculiar Practice. 5.30 Supersense. 6.00 Top of the Pops. 6.25 Dr Who: Death to the Daleks. 6.55 Dad's Army. 7.25 Are You Being Served? 7.55 Noel's House Party. 8.50 How To Be a Little S'd. 9.00 Benny Hill. 9.50 World Weather. 10.00 Not the Nine O'Clock News. 10.30 Fawlty Towers. 11.00 The Young Ones. 11.30 TOTP2. 12.30 Later with Jools Holland. 1.30 World Weather. 1.35 Climates of Opinion.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.20 Window on Europe. 8.00 World Headlines and Weather. 8.05 World Focus: Heart of the Matter. 9.00 World Headlines and Weather. 9.05 World Focus: The Giant Awakes. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Time Out: Holiday. 11.00 World Headlines and Weather. 11.05 World Focus: Horizon. 12.00 World News. 12.20 Britain in View. 12.50 Earth Report. 1.00 World Headlines and Weather. 1.05 World Focus: Naked City. 2.00 World News and Weather. 2.20 This Week. 3.00 World News and Weather. 3.30 Timeout: Film 97 with Barry Norman. 4.00 World Headlines and Weather. 4.05 World Focus: Assignment. 5.00 World News and Weather. 5.30 Timeout: Tomorrow's World. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 Time Out: The Clothes Show. 7.00 World News and Weather. 7.20 This Week. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.20 Britain in View. 9.00 World Headlines and Weather. 9.05 World Focus: Horizon. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Time Out: Top Gear. 11.00 World News and Weather. 11.20 Window on Europe. 12.00 World News. 12.25 This Week. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.30 India Business Report. 2.00 World News and Weather. 2.20 This Week. 3.00 World News and Weather. 3.30 India Business Report. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.20 This Week. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.05 World Focus: Horizon. 5.05 World Focus: Horizon. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.25 India Business Report. 6.25 India Business Report.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News. 7.10 Farming Today. 7.50 Prayer for the Day. 8.00 Today. 10.00 News. 10.05 Sport On 4. 10.30 Breakaway. 11.00 Loose Ends. 12.00 The Week In Westminster. 12.30 Asia File. 1.00 Money Box. 1.25 Just a Minute. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 News. 2.10 Any Questions? 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 Any Answers. 3.30 Saturday Playhouse: The Blind Fiddler of Glenadauch. 5.00 That's History. 5.30 Science Now. 6.00 File on 4. 6.40 See it My Way. 6.50 Shipping Forecast. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.25 Week Ending. 7.50 Close Ups. 8.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. 8.50 On These Days. 9.50 Saturday Night Theatre: Young PC. 10.35 (LW) Test Match Special. 10.35 (FM) Classics with Kay. 10.50 (FM) Ten to Ten. 11.00 (FM) News. 11.15 (FM) Wallis: The Life and Legends of Wallis Simpson. 12.15 (FM) Love Thang. 12.45 Aesthete's Foot. 1.00 News. 1.20 (LW) Test Match Special. 1.30 (FM) The Late Story: Needy. 1.48 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Fourth Estate. 7.45 Global Concerns. 8.00 World News. 8.15 Letter From America. 8.30 People and Politics. 9.00 News. 9.10 Words of Faith. 9.15 A Jolly Good Show. 10.00 World News. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 Money on the Move. 10.30 How To Listen. 10.45 Sports Roundup. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 BBC English. 11.45 From The Weeklies. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Meridian (Live). 1.00 News. 1.05 World Business Review. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Just a Minute. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News. 3.05 Sportsworld. 4.00 News. 4.05 Sportsworld. 5.00 News. 5.15 Sportsworld. 5.30 News in German 37 (648 only). 6.00 News. 6.01 Weekend. 6.30 From the Weeklies. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Science in Action. 8.00 News. 8.01 The Greenfield Collection. 8.45 Fourth Estate. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 Meridian Live. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Play of the Week: Richard II. 12.30 Anything Goes. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Letter From America. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Just A Minute. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 People & Politics. 4.00 News. 4.15 Sports Roundup. 4.30 Music Review. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Short Story. 5.45 On The Move. 6.00 Newsday. 6.30 Weekend.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.00 Seventh Heaven. 9.00 Where The Red Fern Grows. 11.00 Four Jills In A Jeep. 1.00 Maverick. 3.15 Johnny's Girl. 5.00 Silence Of Adultery. 7.00 Angel Flight Down. 9.00 Miami Rhapsody. 11.00 Nell. 12.55 Monolith. 2.30 Hostile Hostages. 4.10 The Haunting Of Lisa. 5.40 Silence Of Adultery.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 Fury At Smugglers' Bay. 9.00 The Bellboy. 11.00 Silver Streak. 1.00 The Tin Soldier. 3.00 Lost In Yonkers. 5.00 War Of The Buttons. 7.00 Cops And Robbersons. 9.00 Terminal Velocity. 11.00 Hostile Force. 12.40 Indecent Behaviour. 2.15 The Bait. 4.10 The River Rat. 5.40 Union Station.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 World Sport Special. 8.30 The Rugby Club. 9.30 Racing News. 10.00 Cricket: New Zealand Vs England - Third Test. 12.00 Bud Pro Surfing Tour. 1.00 Sports Saturday. 7.00 Rugby Union: Ireland Vs England and France Vs Wales. 8.30 Cricket: New Zealand Vs England - Third Test. 10.30 Cricket: New Zealand Vs England - Third Test - Live. 5.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Basketball: Slam Magazine. 9.00 Snowboarding: FIS World Cup. 9.30 Luge: Natural Track World Cup. 10.00 Cross-Country Skiing: Worldloppet Cup - Tartu Marathon. 11.00 Speed Skating: World Championships. 1.00 Alpine Skiing: Women's World Championship Downhill - Live. 2.00 Tennis: Marseille ATP Tournament - Semi Finals - Live. 4.00 Tennis: Dubai ATP Tournament - Semi Finals - Live. 8.00 Alpine Skiing. 9.00 Alpine Skiing: Men's World Championship Slalom - Live. 10.00 Equestrianism: Volvo Jumping World Cup - Live. 11.15 Alpine Skiing: World Championship Closing Ceremony - Live. 11.45 Speed Skating: World Championships. 2.00 Close.

Sky One

● Astra

8.00 Oscar and Olivia. 8.30 Free Willy. 9.00 Young Indiana Jones Chronicles. 10.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. 11.00 Quantum Leap. 12.00 Star Trek. 1.00 World Wrestling Federation: Blast Off. 2.00 World Wrestling Federation: Challenge. 3.00 Kung Fu: The Legend Continues. 4.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager. 6.00 The Hit Mix. 7.00 Kung Fu: The Legend Continues. 8.00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys. 9.00 Coppers. 9.30 Cops I. 10.00 Cops II. 10.30 Cop Files. 11.00 Law and Order. 12.00 The Red Shoe Diaries. 12.30 The Movie Show. 1.00 L.A.P.D. 1.30 The Lucy Show. 2.00 Dream On. 2.30 Smouldering Lust. 3.00 Hit Mix Long Play.

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 The Sullivans. 10.00 Juliet Bravo. 11.00 Neighbours. 1.00 Pop Profile. 1.10 EastEnders. 3.55 Minder. 5.00 Larry Grayson's Generation Game. 6.15 The A-Team. 7.15 Bullseye. 7.45 Just Good Friends. 8.25 Whatever Happened To The Likely Lads? 9.05 The Detectives. 9.45 Kojak. 10.45 The Sweeney. 11.50 The Equalizer. 12.45 Canned Carrott. 1.20 Miami Vice. 2.10 The Album Show. 3.05 Shopping At Night.

NBC Superchannel

● Astra/Eutelsat

7.00 European Living: Travel Xpress. 7.30 The McLaughlin Group. 8.00 Hello Austria, Hello Vienna. 8.30 Europa Journal. 9.00 Users Group. 9.30 Computer Chronicles. 10.00 Internet Cafe. 10.30 At Home. 11.00 Super Shop. 12.00 Spin: Bumps and Jumps. 1.00 Euro PGA Golf. 2.00 NHL Power Week. 3.00 Sweden Grand Prix. 4.00 European Living: Fashion File. 4.30 European Living: Wine Xpress. 5.00 Best of the Ticket. 5.30 Scan. 6.00 MSNBC: The Site. 7.00 National Geographic. 8.00 National Geographic. 9.00 Profiler. 10.00 The Tonight Show with Jay Leno in Las Vegas. 11.00 Late Night with Conan O'Brien. 12.00 Talkin' Jazz. 12.30 The Ticket. 1.00 The Tonight Show with Jay Leno in Las Vegas. 2.00 MSNBC: Internight Weekend. 3.00 Talking with David Frost. 4.00 Talkin' Jazz. 4.30 European Living: Executive Lifestyles. 5.00 Talking with David Frost. 6.00 European Living: Travel Xpress. 6.30 Inspiration. 6.30 Inspiration.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.00 Saturday Stack Introduction. 5.01 Fire on the Rim. 6.00 Fire on the Rim. 7.00 Fire on the Rim. 8.00 Fire on the Rim. 9.00 History's Turning Points. 9.30 Disaster. 10.00 Extreme Machines. 11.00 Battlefield. 12.00 Battlefield. 1.00 Outlaws. 2.00 Roadshow. 2.30 World of Adventures. 3.00 Close.

Television and radio — Sunday

BBC 1

7.20am Match Of The Day: The Road To Wembley. 8.30 Jim Henson's Animal Show. 8.55 Playdays. 9.15 20 Steps To Better Management. 9.30 Breakfast With Frost. 10.30 Kingdom Come! 11.15 See Hear! 11.45 Deutsch Plus. 12.00 The Eleventh Hour. 1.00 CountryFile. 1.25 Weather For The Week Ahead. 1.30 On The Record. 2.30 EastEnders. 3.55 The Clothes Show. 4.20 Variety Club Showbusiness Awards. 5.00 Match Of The Day: The Road To Wembley. 7.10 News And Weather. 7.30 Regional News. 7.35 Dale's Red Nose Collection. 7.40 Songs Of Praise. 8.15 Antiques Roadshow. 9.00 Ballykissangel. 9.50 The Morecambe And Wise Show. 10.20 Ivanhoe. 11.15 News And Weather. 11.30 People's Century. 12.25 FILM: Cry Freedom. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 Close.

BBC 2

7.05am Open University. 8.25 Open Sunday. 9.15 Children's BBC: Stay Tooned. 10.10 The Family Ness. 10.15 The Itsy Bitsy Spider. 10.35 Mighty Max. 11.00 Ship To Shore. 11.30 Grange Hill. 11.55 The Wild House. 12.20 Short Change. 12.45 The O Zone. 1.15 Singled Out. 1.40 Brothers And Sisters. 2.05 The Simpsons. 2.30 Around Westminster. 3.00 Sid Sunday. 3.50 FILM: Krakatoa: East Of Java. 5.55 Rugby Special. 7.00 Natural World. 7.50 The Money Programme. 8.30 Sounding The Century. 10.30 Red Dwarf. 11.00 The Smell Of Reeves And Mortimer. 11.30 FILM: My Life. 1.30 FILM: Forbidden: Tetsuo II: Bodyhammer. 2.55 Close. 3.00 Learning Zone. 7.00 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.15 World Weather. 7.20 ChuckleVision. 7.35 Bodger and Badger. 7.50 The Sooty Show. 8.10 Dangermouse. 8.35 Uncle Jack and the Loch Noch Monster. 9.00 Blue Peter. 9.20 Grange Hill Omnibus. 9.45 The O Zone. 10.00 Top of the Pops. 10.30 Turnabout. 11.00 I, Claudius. 11.50 World Weather. 12.00 The Terrace. 12.30 The Bill Omnibus. 1.50 Kilroy. 2.35 Turnabout. 3.00 Melvin and Maureen. 3.15 Bodger and Badger. 3.30 Why Don't You. 3.55 Blue Peter. 4.15 Grange Hill Omnibus. 4.45 I, Claudius. 5.40 Antiques Roadshow. 6.15 TOTP2. 7.00 World News. 7.15 World Weather. 7.20 Animal Hospital Heroes. 7.30 Wildlife. 8.00 999. 9.00 Bookmark. 10.30 Yes Minister. 11.00 Boys from the Blackstuff. 11.30 Songs of Praise. 12.00 Widows. 12.55 World Weather. 1.00 Japanese Education: Changing the Mould.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.20 Britain in View. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.20 This Week. 9.00 World Headlines and Weather. 9.05 World Focus: Assignment. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Timeout: The Clothes Show. 11.00 World Headlines and Weather. 11.05 World Focus: Heart of the Matter. 12.00 World News and Weather. 12.20 Window on Europe. 1.00 World Headlines and Weather. 1.05 World Focus: The Giant Awakes. 2.00 World Headlines and Weather. 2.05 Breakfast with Frost. 3.00 World News and Weather. 3.30 Timeout: Holiday. 4.00 World Headlines and Weather. 4.05 World Focus: Horizon. 5.00 World News and Weather. 5.20 Earth Report. 5.30 Timeout: Film 97 with Barry Norman. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 Timeout: Top Gear. 7.00 World News and Weather. 7.20 On the Record. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.20 Window on Europe. 9.00 World Headlines and Weather. 9.05 World Focus: BBC Global Report. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Timeout: Tomorrow's World. 11.00 World Report, World Business Report and 24 Hours. 12.00 World Report, World Business Report and 24 Hours. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.10 World Focus: The Money Programme. 2.00 Newsroom, World Business Report, Asia Today, 24 Hours and Weather. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.00 World Headlines and Weather. 5.05 World Focus: The Money Programme. 5.05 World Focus: The Money Programme. 6.00 Newsday. 6.00 Newsday.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz; 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am News. 7.10 Something Understood. 8.00 News. 8.10 Sunday Papers. 8.15 On Your Farm. 8.40 Sunday. 9.50 The Week's Good Cause. 10.00 News. 10.10 Sunday Papers. 10.15 Letter from America. 10.30 Morning Service. 11.15 The Archers. 12.15 Mediumwave. 12.45 Sentimental Journey. 1.15 Desert Island Discs. 1.55 Weather. 2.00 The World This Weekend. 2.55 Shipping Forecast. 3.00 Gardeners' Question Time. 3.30 Classic Serial: The Citadel. 4.30 Pick of the Week. 5.15 Analysis. 6.00 A Day In Doncaster. 6.30 Poetry Please! 6.50 Shipping Forecast. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.15 Feedback. 7.30 Perspectives. 8.00 Children's BBC Radio 4: Anne of Green Gables. 8.30 A Good Read. 9.00 (LW) Open University. 9.00 (FM) The Natural History Programme. 9.30 (FM) That's History. 10.00 (FM) Itchy Feet. 10.30 (FM) Flashpoints. 11.00 (LW) Test Match Special. 11.00 (FM) News. 11.15 (FM) Medicine Now. 11.45 (FM) Breakaway. 12.15 In Committee. 12.45 Seeds of Faith. 1.00 News. 1.20 (LW) Test Match Special. 1.20 (FM) Bells on Sunday. 1.30 (FM) Late Story: Jilted. 1.48 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service.

BBC World Service

7.00am Newsday. 7.30 Jazz For The Asking. 8.00 News. 8.15 Short Story. 8.30 F.O.O.C. 8.50 Write On. 9.00 News. 9.10 Words of Faith. 9.15 The Greenfield Collection. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Review. 10.15 In Praise of God. 10.45 Sports Roundup. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 BBC English. 11.45 Record News. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Shared Experiences. 1.00 News. 1.05 World Business Brief. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Anything Goes. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News. 3.01 International Recital. 3.45 Letter From America. 4.00 News. 4.05 Sports Roundup. 4.15 Development 97. 4.30 F.O.O.C. 4.50 Every Note Paints A Picture. 5.00 News. 5.15 Global Concerns. 5.30 News in German. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 Write On. 6.40 Book Choice. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Play of the Week: Richard II. 8.30 The Vintage Chart Show. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Brief. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 Jazz For The Asking. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Letter From America. 11.45 Sports Roundup. 12.00 News. 12.10 Who's Who In Music. 12.15 The Learning World. 12.30 In Praise of God. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Development '97. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Short Story. 2.45 On The Move. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 Anything Goes. 4.00 News. 4.15 Sports Roundup. 4.30 Shared Experiences. 5.00 Newsdesk. 5.30 Europe Today. 6.00 Newsday. 6.30 Europe Today.

The Movie Channel

● Astra

7.10 In Old Kentucky. 9.00 Where The Red Fern Grows: Part Two. 11.00 The Seventh Voyage Of Sinbad. 1.00 Margie. 3.00 Innocent Moves. 5.00 Alone In The Woods. 7.00 Born To Be Wild. 9.00 Silent Fall. 11.00 Outbreak. 1.10 The Making Of A Hollywood Madam: The Heidi Fleiss Story. 2.45 The Red Shoe Diaries No.5: Weekend Pass. 4.15 The Man In My Life.

Sky Movies

● Astra

7.00 The Devil's Brigade. 9.15 The Magic Of The Golden Bear. 11.00 It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World. 1.35 Four Eyes. 3.10 Eight Seconds. 5.00 It Could Happen To You. 7.00 The Air Up There. 9.00 Forget Paris. 11.00 Jason's Lyric. 1.00 The Movie Show. 1.30 Fortress. 3.05 The Quiet Earth. 4.35 Closer And Closer.

Sky Sports

● Astra

8.00 Rugby Union: Ireland Vs England and France Vs Wales. 9.30 Cricket: New Zealand Vs England - Third Test. 12.00 Football: Goals on Sunday - FA Cup Special. 2.00 Football: Bradford City Vs Sheffield Wednesday - Live. 5.00 Beach Volleyball. 6.00 NHL Ice Hockey: Florida Panthers V New York Rangers. 8.00 Cricket: New Zealand Vs England - Third Test. 10.30 Cricket: New Zealand Vs England - Third Test - Live. 5.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Equestrianism: Volvo World Cup. 9.30 Bobsleigh: World Cup. 11.00 Speed Skating: World Championships. 1.00 Alpine Skiing: World Championships. 2.15 Tennis: Marseille ATP Tournament - Final - Live. 3.30 Athletics: Meeting Vittel du Pas de Calais - Live. 6.00 Tennis: Dubai ATP Tournament - Final - Live. 8.00 Speed Skating: World Championships. 9.00 Boxing. 10.00 Bobsleigh: World Cup Sixth Leg - Live. 12.30 Speed Skating: World Championships. 1.30 Close.

Sky One

● Astra

7.00 Hour of Power. 8.00 Oscar and Olivia. 8.30 Free Willy. 9.00 Young Indiana Jones Chronicles. 10.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. 11.00 Quantum Leap. 12.00 Star Trek. 1.00 World Wrestling Federation: Superstars. 2.00 The Lazarus Man. 3.00 Kung Fu: the Legend Continues. 4.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager. 6.00 Muppets Tonight. 6.30 Walker's World. 7.00 The Simpsons. 7.30 The Simpsons. 8.00 Early Edition. 9.00 The New Adventures of Superman. 10.00 The X-Files. 11.00 Millennium. 12.00 Forever Knight. 1.00 L.A.P.D. 1.30 The Lucy Show. 2.00 Civil Wars. 3.00 Hit Mix Long Play.

UK Gold

● Astra

8.00 Jackanory. 8.30 Chigley. 8.35 Blue Peter. 9.05 Animal Magic. 9.35 Worzel Gummidge. 10.05 Survivors. 11.05 Blake's Seven. 12.05 Dr Who Omnibus: Survival. 1.30 Charge Of The Light Brigade. 4.00 The Bill Omnibus. 6.20 In Sickness and in Health. 7.00 Bullseye. 7.30 You Rang, M'Lord? 8.30 Morecambe and Wise. 9.30 Strictly Ballroom. 11.20 I, Claudius. 12.25 Spitting Image. 12.55 Live at Jongleurs. 1.25 Race Against The Dark. 3.00 Shopping at Night.

NBC Superchannel

● Astra/Eutelsat

9.00 Executive Lifestyles. 9.30 European Living: Fashion File. 10.00 European Living: Travel Xpress. 10.30 Travel Xpress. 11.00 Super Shop. 12.00 NBC Super Sports. 12.30 Gillette World Sports Special. 1.00 Inside the PGA Tour. 1.30 Inside the SPGA Tour. 2.00 Downhill Relay Skiing. 3.00 NCAA Basketball. 4.00 Dateline NBC. 5.00 The McLaughlin Group. 5.30 Meet the Press. 6.30 Scan. 7.00 European Living: Flavours of Italy. 7.30 Travel Xpress. 8.00 Time and Again. 9.00 Golf. 10.00 The Best of the Tonight Show with Jay Leno. 11.00 Profiler. 12.00 Talkin' Jazz. 12.30 The Ticket. 1.00 The Best of the Tonight Show with Jay Leno. 2.00 MSNBC: Internight Weekend. 3.00 Frost's Century. 4.00 Talkin' Jazz. 4.30 European Living: Travel Xpress. 5.00 Frost's Century. 6.00 The Best of The Ticket. 6.30 European Living: Travel Xpress.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.00 Wings. 6.00 Warriors. 7.00 Lonely Planet. 8.00 The Quest. 8.30 Arthur C Clarke's Mysterious World. 9.00 Showcase Introduction: What If? 9.01 Extraterrestrial Contact. 10.00 California Earthquake. 11.00 President Martin Luther King. 12.00 Justice Files. 1.00 Abuse of Memory. 2.00 Extreme Machines. 3.00 Close.

How the right to silence unleashed the Mail's moral ire

Lawrence Donegan and **Gary Younge** on a press challenge

Neville and Doreen Lawrence, Stephen's parents, whose quest for justice led to the Mail's stance PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

IT was a classic front page: a combination of the visual boldness beloved of all the tabloids and the moral certitude the Daily Mail prides itself on. Five men pictured beneath a one-word headline, "Murderers", and an invitation to them to sue if they dared.

The challenge has not been taken up. So far.

But as solicitors for two of the five last night said they were considering suing for libel, the newspaper's rivals were admiring. And, in a highly unusual intervention, Home Secretary Michael Howard said the Mail had not necessarily broken the law by naming the men.

The five men, all from south-east London, provoked widespread outrage earlier this week when they refused to answer questions at an inquest into the killing of Stephen Lawrence, an 18-year-old student who was stabbed to death while waiting at bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, in April 1993. Questioned by the barrister acting for the dead youth's family, they all claimed the common right of "privilege" against self-incrimination.

The jury returned a unanimous verdict of "unlawful killing", adding that Mr Lawrence had been killed in unprovoked racist attack. Under English law they were not allowed to name those responsible.

Despite the threat of legal action, the Daily Mail was unrepentant last night. "This is not a kangaroo court, because we're not trying them. What we are doing is challenging them to put up a defence, because this is something they have refused to do so far," said the paper's deputy editor, Peter Wright.

Mr Wright said the paper had taken its stand because of the seriousness of the case and the issues it raised — though in the past it has covered the story less comprehensively than most national newspapers, with 20 stories on the case in almost four years, compared to 39 in the Guardian.

But last night, other tabloid editors praised the Mail. "A courageous piece of journalism," said Stuart Higgins, editor of the Sun. "It is newspapers' job to change laws and regulations when they believe they are wrong."

Piers Morgan, editor of the Daily Mirror, was equally complimentary. "They (the Mail) were saying exactly what the whole country was thinking. It was a brilliant piece of journalism and I wish I'd thought of it."

Elsewhere, support for the Mail's action was more qualified. Channel Four newscaster Jon Snow said: "I'm glad that they've done it, but I feel queasy about it too. I'm glad because the law failed, but I'm queasy because I believe in the rule of law."

SNOW'S quandary was shared by several liberal commentators, who believe trial by media is wrong but are nevertheless sympathetic to the Mail's verdict. On the one hand, they were eager to see the Lawrences get a just outcome in the case of their son. On the other, they acknowledged that to support the Mail's stand is to forgo any secure tenancy on the moral high ground when it comes to criticising the media for putting itself above or outside the law.

Rosie Boycott, editor of the Independent on Sunday, said: "It's not one of the greatest precedents, but in this case I think it was good. I think it shows how much the media and ordinary people have become people with the right to swing the course of justice."

However, to concede that there are times when raw populism, as characterised in the Mail's front page, can be more just than the judicial system itself could one day blow up in their faces, claimed media-commentator Stephen Glover.

"People should not judge this by whether they think the people were guilty or not. This is the usurpation of the role of the judiciary by a newspaper, and that is wrong.

"Unless Paul Dacre was present at that bus stop and saw that those five men were equally guilty of murder, then he shouldn't have done it. They cannot be sure that they did it. They should investigate whether there had been a miscarriage of justice and shown how," he said.

Hugh Stephenson, professor of journalism at City University was equally critical: "You shouldn't make serious accusations against people unless you have proof. Courts are for finding people guilty, not newspapers," he said.

Alan Taylor, acting editor of the Scotsman, said Scottish courts were more severe than their English counterparts when dealing with newspapers.

"I admire the boldness of what the Mail did, but I don't think we would have done the same. Our policy is that we always observe the law. Newspapers do have the right to campaign to change the law and I believe the Lawrence family has been badly served by British justice, but we can't have trial by newspaper."

But while the debate about whether the end justifies the means raged in newsrooms, many expressed astonishment that such a row should be provoked by the Mail at all, given its record of reporting racial incidents in the past.

Will Hutton, the editor of the Observer, believes that the Mail's front page sets a dangerous precedent. "But my first thought," he said, "is that it is so remarkable that the Daily Mail should so publicly come out in support of a miscarriage of justice which involves a black British citizen."

Leader comment, page 8

'Unprecedented' . . . the front page of yesterday's Daily Mail

Evening up the scales of justice

Commentary
This was a free press at its best, says **Roy Greenslade**

THE media has many critics. The press is ritually denounced. And the Daily Mail is commonly singled out for the harshest condemnation, not least by me. But surely this is a moment to offer unconditional praise. This was the media at its best. The paper got it right. Editor Paul Dacre deserves the enthusiastic support of all who value a free press.

This was not a decision taken on a whim at the conclusion of Stephen Lawrence's inquest. Reporters had been dispatched to the estate where the accused had lived. The case had been carefully researched. The newspaper's legal advisers had been consulted. Dacre was making sure of his ground.

All he was told by his journalists and lawyers confirmed Dacre's earliest suspicions. This was an extraordinary case of injustice and the only decent, humane response from his paper must be to take, in his phrase, an "unprecedented step".

After all, the Lawrence family had tried every other remedy. At last, they found an inquest jury on their side. But that was not enough alone to point up just how sad and alienating their position had become. Only by the intervention of the Mail have they been given the feeling that people — white people in the white people's press — are behind them too.

When the system fails — and there can be little doubt that it failed for the Lawrences — it is not only proper for the press to step in, it is its duty. What else is to be done in such cases? Write a sympathetic leading article and walk away until the next time, leaving a community's anger to fester and letting the culprits get away with their alleged crime? Instead, the Mail could see the scales of justice tipped against this bereaved family and evened up the balance by adding its weight.

Inevitably, the paper has been accused of trial by media. Roger Gale, a Tory MP who purports to be a media expert and opens his mouth at every opportunity, led the charge. It is obvious that there are dangers if this were to be the thin end of the wedge. We don't want newspapers to supplant the courts. But this was no ordinary case. Witnesses have been intimidated. And the five men even refused to speak to the inquest jury.

It is true that they probably cannot afford to launch a libel action against the Mail. Then again, the Lawrences had to rely on community fundraising during their four-year ordeal. If the people around the five are convinced of their innocence, they could do the same.

There will be those who cannot stand the Mail at any price who will wheedle about its stance. Let me anticipate the carping of the critics. It was, some may say, merely a cynical exercise to win publicity and build circulation. Only a cynic would dare to make such a false accusation.

It was, others may suggest, a bogus attempt by the Mail to win respect in a black community it has largely ignored, and sometimes abused, in the past. Even if the charge about racism is true there is not a scintilla of doubt about the Mail's sincerity.

It was, still more may claim, a soft option, an easy campaign to launch, with no risks for the paper. That won't wash either because the Mail dared to do this entirely alone. It went out on a limb with the kind of daring anti-establishment journalism that is in the best traditions of a campaigning, crusading press. Anyway, if the injustice was so transparent, why didn't its tabloid rivals make a similar song and dance?

Let's give credit where it is due. The Daily Mail done well.

Options limited for accused men

The law
Truth or libel will need cash to prove, says **Clare Dyer**

THE Daily Mail faces little, if any, risk of a comeback over its decision to brand five young men as Stephen Lawrence's murderers.

The paper's invitation to the five to sue to clear their names is unlikely to be taken up. Legal aid is not available for libel actions and the five have no resources.

The only other option is an action for malicious falsehood, which does qualify for legal aid. But the men would have to prove both that they were innocent and that the Mail either knew the story it printed was false or was reckless as to whether it was true or false.

There are no active or pending proceedings involving the five men, so contempt of court is not a concern.

The Lawrences are considering launching OJ Simpson-style civil proceedings. But these would be heard by a judge, not a jury, so there is no danger of prejudicing the outcome.

A civil action against the men for damages seems the only way the family can now secure a finding that the men were responsible for Stephen's death. Legal aid is available for this, but the Lawrences may not qualify financially. They could also be turned down on the ground that the defendants lack the finances to satisfy any judgment against them.

The Lawrences could mount a public campaign to pay for the action, or their lawyers could donate their services. But the men might get legal aid and the family could face a bill for many thousands of pounds if the action failed. The lack of evidence which caused the criminal case to collapse would still be a problem.

In most civil cases, the standard of proof is lower. The jury has to be satisfied only "on the balance of probabilities" that what the plaintiff alleges was more likely to have happened than not. In a criminal case, jurors must be satisfied "beyond reasonable doubt".

But in 1991 the High Court ruled that where a civil court's judgment would brand a defendant guilty of murder, the criminal rather than the civil standard applies.

The case was brought by the mother of Lynn Siddons, a teenager murdered in 1978 beside a canal south of Derby. It was the first civil claim for murder to be brought where there had been no previous criminal conviction.

A man was tried and acquitted, but the family believed the real culprit was his stepfather, Michael Brookes. There was a newspaper campaign for him to be tried.

The claim succeeded. The family won £10,641 damages. And Michael Brookes was eventually tried, convicted and sentenced to life.

The Lawrence family's own private prosecution has put paid to any such outcome for three of the men, because they were formally acquitted after their Old Bailey trial collapsed last year.

Back in the 1970s, Time magazine solemnly fingered him as one of Britain's potential world leaders. "Yes, and do you know who the others were?" he says dryly. "Nick Scott, Prince Charles and Shirley Williams."
Joanna Coles interviews Peter Jay

The Week page 15

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Labour plan to cut VAT on fuel faces threat from EU

Stephen Bates in Brussels

LABOUR'S pledge to reduce VAT on domestic fuel bills, which has formed one of its key pre-election promises, was under threat from the European Commission last night as officials in Brussels said it would be illegal under tax harmonisation rules.

The latest European challenge to the party's freedom of manoeuvre over taxation follows the recent wrangle over whether a Labour government would be able to levy a windfall tax on monopoly privatised industries.

Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, has claimed that difficulty had been resolved by legal advice.

In November in a party political broadcast, he repeated the party's pledge to reduce VAT on heating bills in his first budget, which would cost the government £450 million in lost revenues. But yesterday, senior officials at the commission threw doubt on whether a Labour government could cut VAT on gas and electricity from 8 to 5 per cent and warned that the issue might lead to a challenge in the European Court.

Labour MEPs who raised the issue at a recent private meeting with John Prescott, the party's deputy leader, claimed yesterday that he had told them it was "a very unhelpful question to ask".

Commission sources made clear that Britain will only be allowed to raise VAT rates, up to the standard EU-wide figure of 15 per cent, not reduce them because of an agreement initiated in January 1991 to harmonise tax rates across the union.

A senior official said: "If Britain wants to raise the rate, that would be possible but you cannot go backwards."

> Rate can go up but not down, commission sources insist

In a little-noticed recent written answer in the European Parliament to a question posed by Barry Seal, the Labour MEP for Yorkshire West, the commission stated: "It is evident that, if changes were to be made, they could only have as their aim further harmonisation, *i.e.* taxation at the standard rate . . .

"Any possible move by the British government to reduce the VAT rate on heating fuel from 8 per cent to 5 per cent would go against the objective of further harmonisation and would not be within the spirit of the transitional arrangements.

"If any such request were to be received from the British government, the commission would examine it against this background."

John Major's government incurred a huge public outcry when it first proposed introducing VAT on fuel in two stages in Norman Lamont's last budget in 1993. It was ultimately defeated over plans for the second stage hike to 17.5 per cent, and the rate remains at 8 per cent.

Last night one of Gordon Brown's senior advisers confirmed that the party was committed to reducing VAT on domestic fuel and claimed that Labour had been advised by the House of Commons library that it would not be illegal to do so.

Later, a spokesman for Mr Brown's office told the Guardian he did not "give a monkey's f***" what the Commission said. "It is quite clear we are entitled to reduce VAT to 5 per cent. We have had discussions with the commission. They confirm that a member state intending to apply for such a rate must inform them and in government that is what we shall do."

Shephard tightens test for trainee teachers

John Carvel
Education Editor

CONSERVATIVES and Labour were last night battling for the political ownership of traditional educational values as the Government prepared to announce strict controls to stop teachers entering the profession without a strong grasp of grammar, mental arithmetic and discipline.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, is due next week to launch the first national curriculum for the training of primary school teachers.

It will require mastery of the full range of techniques for teaching reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and the prevention of common mathematical mistakes.

Teachers will not be allowed to qualify if they can not manage effective whole-class teaching, maintain discipline, motivate pupils and develop at least one specialist subject up to A level standard.

Although the package is unlikely to change the approach already adopted in the better teacher training colleges, the Government plans to present it as the answer to decades of slackness.

Mrs Shephard ordered the new curriculum after researchers found that 46 per cent of newly-qualified teachers said they did not feel confident in the classroom.

As details began to leak out yesterday, Labour claimed proprietorship of the ideas. David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, said Mrs Shephard had done nothing until his speech to a head-teachers' conference last May.

> The training curriculum will require mastery of the three Rs

"It is quite extraordinary that after 18 years in government that Conservatives are only now turning their attention to the reform of teacher training.

"It is an area for which the Government has complete responsibility. Ministers cannot blame anyone else."

Mrs Shephard would not comment until the official launch on Tuesday, but her political allies said it was straining credibility for Mr Blunkett to claim she was copying his proposals. They had resulted from months of work by Anthea Millett, chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency.

The proposals will stipulate that new recruits will not be allowed to teach in a state school without securing qualified teacher status. To acquire that they will have to meet all the training standards and show they can foster the enthusiasm of pupils.

Trainees learning how to teach English in primary schools will have to show understanding of the structure, derivations and meanings of words, the sound system underlying speech, and rules and aberrations in spelling. They will have to teach pupils to be articulate and coherent, introducing them to synonyms and antonyms, alliteration and imaginative ways of conveying meaning.

In maths, they must learn effective ways of teaching mental arithmetic and know how to ask questions which probe pupils' understanding so that misconceptions can be diagnosed and corrected.

Action to improve teacher training was sparked by a controversial study of 45 London schools by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools. It said one in five pupils were illiterate at the age of seven, and eight out of 10 had a reading ability lower than their age.

Top of the pops . . . Victoria Wine's branch in Alderley Edge, Cheshire, which sells more champagne than any other branch in Britain PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS THOMOND

Bolly village puts Ab Fab in shade

David Ward joins the champagne set

ACCORDING to Arthurian legend, a host of soldiers and their steeds sleep beneath the great sandstone scarp of Alderley Edge, in Cheshire.

Until yesterday, it was believed they await a call from the once and future king. Now it appears they are sleeping off a hangover.

The reason is that Alderley Edge, a village within commuting distance of Manchester, has been discovered to be the champagne capital of Britain. Its branch of Victoria Wine shifted 694 bottles of the fizz in four weeks, one for every six residents (excluding legendary knights). Not even the branch in Mayfair, central London, could top that.

The village attracts new money: footballers, Coronation Street stars, and entrepreneurs. The cars are all Range Rovers, BMWs, and Mercedes. The estate agents offer "cottage-style" homes at £350,000 a go.

Kevin Bates, manager of the branch, knows he is on a good patch. "People round here have money to spare and know what they want. Outsiders get the wrong impression and think they are very snobby. But it's completely the opposite — I'm on first name terms with many customers."

He stocks 18 brands of champagne, from £11.99 to £65 a bottle. "We'll gift-wrap and deliver free of charge," he added.

Gail Briscoe, a regular for 14 years, called in, not for Bollinger but for whisky, although she confided she would probably buy 15 bottles of champagne a year. "It doesn't surprise me that Alderley came out top. There are a lot of wealthy people around, and they do a lot of entertaining. So do we — but not with cases of champagne."

Round the corner at the Moss Rose pub, a long-time resident drew on a pint of Robinson's bitter, Stockport's answer to Moët et Chandon, but confessed he had three or four bottles of fizz on the rack at home. "But I wouldn't say we were big buyers," he said. "We have it for special occasions."

Wealth in Alderley, he reflected, depended on one's position on the hill beneath which Arthur's men snore. The higher you go, the bigger the bank balance. "I'm at the bottom," he confided.

In the money

AN ARMADA beacon was lit on the summit of Alderley Edge in 1588, but the village at its feet (1997 population: 4,500) hardly existed till the railway came in the 1830s.

The railway company offered free tickets to and from Manchester for 20 years to anyone whose home had a rateable value of more than £50. Some of the city's cotton magnates could not resist the bargain.

Alderley promised rural air and big plots for grand villas, the best affording broad prospects north towards the industrial city.

Mining for copper, lead, iron, cobalt and even silver continued on and off for 2,000 years until all work ceased about 50 years ago.

The village remains a prosperous middle-class enclave.

English cricket suffers fresh defeat as Lord's hi-tech scoreboard hit for six by council

Stuart Millar

ENGLISH cricket yesterday suffered the latest in a long line of setbacks when Westminster council rejected plans for an electronic scoreboard at Lord's.

After Atherton's men succeeded in putting the disappointments of this winter behind them with a test victory against New Zealand, it had been hoped that England's luck had changed. But councillors decided the proposed 56ft high and 36ft wide, scoreboard would undermine the special character of Lord's.

It would have overlooked the hallowed turf from the north-east corner of the ground behind the Compton stand.

According to the MCC, the plans would have allowed Lord's to catch up with its rivals, most of which have scoreboards positioned diagonally to the cricket square. The two existing scoreboards at Lord's are at right angles to the line of play.

However, the scheme ran into opposition from neighbouring residents in the well-heeled area of St John's Wood, north-west London. English Heritage also opposed the plans. It feared the scoreboard's large size and position would damage the conservation area and Lord's itself, sitting opposite the listed pavilion and adjacent to the clock tower. "It would have had a very cluttering effect on the character of the ground," a spokeswoman said.

Friends of the Earth to sue DoT over Sea Empress

A year after 72,000 gallons of oil spilt off Pembrokeshire campaigners are angry no one has yet been held accountable. Paul Brown reports

A YEAR after the Sea Empress grounded on rocks, its cargo cloaked South Wales in oil and the subsequent salvage operation went disastrously wrong, Friends of the Earth has announced it is to bring a private prosecution against the Department of Transport.

A series of government inquiries into the disaster have yet to report on its causes and who was responsible but now both the DoT and the Milford Haven Port Authority face court action for their handling of the affair.

Although the official report into the events on the Pembrokeshire coast remains unpublished, enough evidence has leaked out for it to be clear a criminal prosecution may succeed.

At least that is counsel's opinion to Friends of the Earth, which is preparing for a high profile private prosecution. Solicitors Leigh, Day & Co have written to the Environment Agency giving it notice that if no prosecution has been announced by April 15 they will instigate a private prosecution on the instructions of FoE.

Tony Juniper, campaigns director of FoE, said: "All those responsible should be exposed and held accountable. However, there can be little confidence that this will happen if action is left solely to official agencies. If justice is to be done then we must have proper enforcement of environment law."

The Environment Agency has been investigating a possible criminal action under the Water Resources Act 1991. Section 85 makes it an offence to "allow" noxious substances into the sea.

The Environment Agency has powers to prosecute but, according to its spokeswoman, "has to balance whether it is in the public interest to do so".

The 72,000 gallons of oil that washed on to the beaches is still devastating wildlife, fishing and tourism on the South Wales coast. But the Government refused to hold a public inquiry.

An attempt to demote and censure the pilot, John Pearn, failed after a couple of hearings in camera.

None of the witnesses to the secret DoT Marine Accident Investigation Branch inquiry have been heard in public and there has been no cross-examination of witnesses. The full facts of what happened in Milford Haven Port and on the bridge of the Sea Empress on January 15, 1996, and the following six days of the bungled salvage operation may never be known.

This is in sharp contrast to the Donaldson inquiry into the January 1993 Braer disaster in the Shetland Islands where the actions of everyone were closely scrutinised. That disaster cost £2 million — the Sea Empress has cost £10 million so far.

Lord Donaldson recommended a permanent fleet of tugs at strategic locations on stand-by to intervene in the case of impending disaster. It did not happen, even though the report catalogued 34 possible incidents in the 14 months after Braer.

The Sea Empress was the next "big one" waiting to happen and one reason 72,000 gallons of oil ended up in the sea was that there were no tugs ready to intervene. If Donaldson had been implemented there would have been.

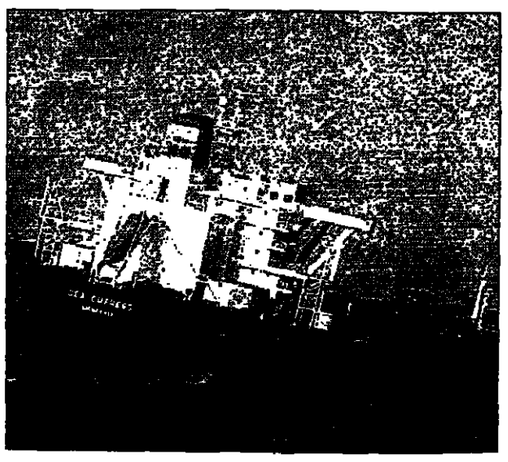
What remains central to the Sea Empress inquiry is the role of the DoT during the salvage operation. Did ministers intervene or did they dither?

Leaks from the official investigation, which is partly an internal study into the DoT's shortcomings, suggest there were mistakes at Milford Haven and a lack of a proper chain of command to Whitehall. There were no proper charts and lack of information about tides on which refloating the tanker depended. A release date for the apparently already completed report is still months away, according to the DoT, almost certainly well after the general election. It should contain answers to many of the questions conservation groups, pilots and local people are still asking — but there is not much confidence that it will.

The sight of as many as seven oil tankers hove to outside the port in sometimes rough seas waiting for their turn at the three berths at Milford Haven cannot be heartening.

Guy Lindley Adams, director of the Marine Conservation Society, said yesterday: "This Government has not learnt the lessons of Braer or Sea Empress. It appears we need to have another major disaster before adequate tug capacity is stationed permanently around the UK coast."

Dr Sian Pullen, head of conservation at the World Wide Fund for Nature, is equally scathing. "While the Government takes inadequate protective measures we can expect a major oil disaster about once every three years," she said.



Oil washed up on the beach at Tenby, South Wales, a year ago, above, and the stricken Sea Empress oil tanker, below PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL KELLY (above), BARRY BATCHELOR (below)

The trouble with Nato

New friends, but familiar old fears

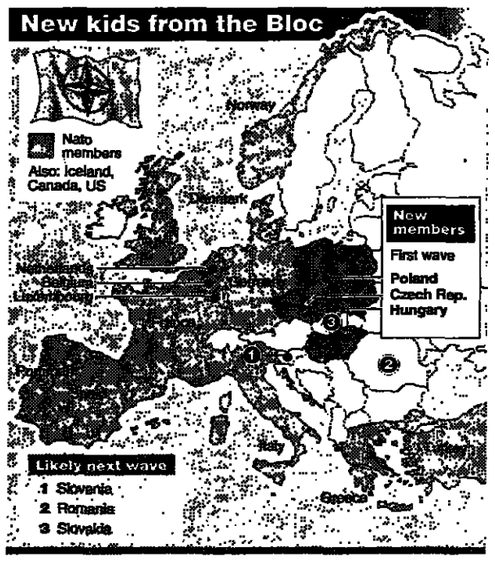
As Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, starts consultations with Nato's European members, expansion of the alliance eastwards tops the agenda she brings with her

The men in the Kremlin fear that they are being relegated as a power in Europe. The map of the continent is being redrawn and they do not have a seat at the draughtsman's table

Hard bargaining is still to come

The Western alliance is proposing a non-binding political agreement enshrining a commitment to consult and co-operate with Moscow, but not obliging it to do so

Ian Black in London reports



NEGOTIATIONS on expanding Nato and keeping the Russians happy are inextricably linked, but the final outcome of both processes is unclear because the alliance is determined at all costs to deny Moscow any veto.

Conventional political-military wisdom in the US and Europe — including the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence in London — is that, despite mixed signals, the Russians will in the end acquiesce, albeit grudgingly, in Nato's grand design for post-cold-war security.

The basic shape of a package deal emerging from over a year of intensive diplomacy — sure to intensify further over the next three months — is that Nato and Russia will embark on a "special relationship" anchored in a charter.

In return Moscow will accept at least three and possibly five new Nato members. The definites are its former Warsaw pact satellites Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Slovenia is a strong possibility, Romania a weak one. The Baltic states are to be excluded.

But much hard bargaining remains to be done. There is not even agreement on the important question of sequence: whether the Nato-Russia arrangements have to be finalised before Nato's Madrid summit in July launches negotiations with the candidates for enlargement. The alliance, wearily familiar with the old Soviet line that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed", insists that they do not.

President Yeltsin will be hoping for progress when he meets President Clinton in Helsinki in March.

The core elements under discussion between Nato and Russia include a charter "enshrining a practical commitment to consultation and cooperation". Moscow wants this to be legally binding, and therefore ratified by national parliaments.

The alliance is proposing a non-binding political agreement that would allow evolution without any "straitjackets."

The charter would create a consultation mechanism that has been called a Nato-Russia Council. Moscow prefers this to an earlier poor-relation formula of "16 plus one".

But a very senior British official says: "It is not likely we will want to accept any formal co-decision in matters of real substance ... Nato will not take any steps which undermine its ability to carry out its key obligation."

Less formally, it is hoped to evolve Nato-Russia co-operation in fields ranging from Bosnian-type peace enforcement through nuclear non-proliferation to conflict prevention and crisis management.

As part of the bargain, Russia also wants "negative" assurances that the accession of its former satellites will not involve threatening deployments.

Nato has already made it clear that it has "no intention, no plans and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of a new member", but it will decline to issue a formal pledge.

Revamping the old conventional forces in Europe treaty, which limits military deployment on the continent, is also intended to assuage Russian concern by promoting stability and transparency.

According to one Russian estimate, Nato's incorporation of Poland, Hungary and the Czech republic would increase the number of alliance divisions from 48 to 62 and its air power by 17 per cent.

Reassuring Russia is not easy. "If you look at all the diverse statements coming from different bits of Moscow," said one diplomat, "they add up to them not wanting us to tart up any runways or repair the fences round any barracks in the territory of new members."

Martin Walker reports from Washington

WITH Russian compliance if possible, but overriding the Kremlin's objections if necessary, the United States will focus its foreign policy for the rest of this century on extending Nato into central and eventually eastern Europe.

"We are on the verge of realising one of the most elusive dreams of this century — an integrated, stable and democratic Europe," the new secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, told Congress this week before her visit to London and other Nato capitals.

"The purpose of enlargement is to do for Europe's east what Nato did 50 years ago for Europe's west: to integrate new democracies, defeat old hatreds, provide confidence in economic recovery, and deter conflict," she added, bringing to strategy the conviction of one who was twice driven into exile from her native Czechoslovakia, by Hitler in 1939 and Stalin in 1948.

Ms Albright and her colleagues are determined to persuade Russia to accept an enlarged Nato which stretches right up to its borders, while devising mechanisms to draw it into a US-led transatlantic trade and security system. She told Congress last week there was really no choice.

"There are only two real alternatives to enlargement. We could replace the alliance with a lowest-common-denominator Nato that includes everyone and imposes obligations on no one. That would devalue and degrade Nato.

"Or we could delay enlargement indefinitely, freezing Nato's membership along its old cold war frontier. That would create not only a permanent injustice but also a permanent source of tension and insecurity in the heart of Europe."

Russian fears of China are likely to steer it ever more into the Western camp

If that argument is true for the first plan — to bring Poland, the Czechs and Hungarians into Nato in 1999 — it holds for the next questions: whether later to include the Baltic states, Balkan countries like Rumania, and even Ukraine.

In the first stage, Washington expects Russia to complain and secure as high a price as it can for its compliance. But in the end, no prospective Russian government is seen in Washington as having much say in the matter of Nato, or in deciding its own geostrategic place in the world. Geography has decided: Russian fears of China are likely to steer it ever more into the Western camp.

Ironically, the enlargement was greeted with scepticism in Washington when first floated. The deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, warned it was "provocative, and badly timed, with what is going on in Russia".

As a compromise, the US promoted a plan conceived by the then Nato commander, General John Shalikashvili, for eastern European countries and Russia to join a Partnership for Peace, a flexible structure that could let them all feel they had a voice, and a prospect of deeper involvement, in the Nato-run security system

Mr Talbott, and with him President Clinton, changed his mind. This was partly because of the pressure from Polish-Americans and other ethnic groups, and partly because of the strength of their argument that, after 40 enforced years in the Warsaw Pact, they deserved membership of the West's most reliable club.

Cost objections were brushed aside. The Czech, Polish and Hungarian military could be made compatible with Nato cheaply, by offering second-hand US F-16 fighters. And building expensive new army infrastructure was deferred on grounds that Russian weakness made it unnecessary to install other Nato troops in eastern Poland.

Even this may be too much for the increasingly isolationist Republicans in Congress, who are just realising that extending Nato means being prepared to risk losing Boston in order to save Budapest.

The Republican leaders are persuaded. Newt Gingrich included Nato enlargement in his Contract with America. But it will still be quite a challenge to get the two-thirds Senate majority needed to ratify extending the Nato treaty.

Enlarging Nato is, however, a poor second to enlarging the European Union. Nato extends a brittle security to new members; only the EU offers the prosperity to make that security self-sustaining and buttress it with the political support democracies need.

EU enlargementis not in America's gift, which is why the eastern Europeans are pressing Washington so hard to get the Nato guarantee while they can. But without EU membership, eastern European Nato members face a fate as grim Turkey's, a Nato member kept out of the real European club.

The real 21st century nightmare for Europe would be an enlarged Nato facing a hostile Russia while the border states remain poor, disgruntled and politically unstable.

David Hearst reports from Moscow

PUT to one side the threats and outrage, the humiliation of a fallen military empire unable to crush a band of Chechen separatists in its back yard. Ignore also a Russian leadership that cannot argue consistently or achieve a single foreign policy objective.

As the bluster disperses, a Russian consensus emerges. It unites a pro-Western economist like the presidential chief of staff Anatoli Chubais, with a communist like Gennady Zyuganov and an extreme nationalist like Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

What Russia faces, for the first time since the 1814 Vienna Congress which decided the political shape of post-Napoleonic Europe, is its relegation as a European power. The Yalta conference confirmed the role of Moscow as a European power. But the map of Europe is now being redrawn and Moscow has no seat at the draughtsman's table.

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, was undoubtedly sold a dummy when he negotiated German reunification in 1990, getting only verbal assurances that Nato would not expand.

The Russian archives have recordings of negotiations between Mr Gorbachev and James Baker, then US Secretary of State, and between the Soviet leader and the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl.

One transcript of a conversation between Mr Baker and Mr Gorbachev on Febuary 9 1990 reads as follows, with Mr Baker speaking: "We understand that, not only for the Soviet Union but also for other European states, it is important to have the guarantees that the United States would keep its [military] presence within the framework of Nato in Germany.

The threat expansion poses to Moscow is not military. It is a political threat

"If the United States would keep its presence in Germany within the Nato framework, the military presence or jurisdiction of Nato would not be expanded even one inch in an eastern direction."

The next day, Mr Kohl told Mr Gorbachev the same thing: "We consider that Nato must not expand the sphere of its actions."

There are many such transcripts, as Jack Matlock, the former US ambassador to Moscow, confirms. These guarantees were never written in a treaty, but they explain why Russia feels it has been deceived.

Russia withdrew its troops from Germany and dismantled half of its heaviest ballistic missiles. It believed, perhaps naively, in a new world order and a new European security system free of Nato and the Warsaw Pact.

The threat the eastward expansion of Nato now poses for Moscow is not military. Few foreign policy strategists in Moscow believe that Nato forces will muster on Russia's borders. It is a political threat.

Alexander Konovalov, president of the Moscow Institute for Strategic Assessments, put it thus: "We are now witnessing the collapse of the Yalta system and that system must be replaced by something new.

"Nato," he added, " was a product of the cold war and confrontation, the main task of which was, and still is, collective defence.

"What is absolutely clear today is that the enlargement of Nato is not going to provide a new system of European security." Russia "finds itself thrown out of the European process".

The second main threat that enlargement poses to Russia is where it stops. After Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic join, who will be next?

In Estonia there are 500,000 ethnic Russians, in Latvia about a million of Slavic origin (including Belarussians and Ukrainians), and in Lithuania about 400,000. That makes nearly two million ethnic Russian in the Baltic states.

In Ukraine there are 12 million ethnic Russians, and Russian is first language for more than half Ukraine's total population — that is more than 25 million people.

The fate of ethnic Russians beyond Russia's borders is a political factor which talk about sovereignty and charters of human rights cannot obscure.

It remains for Russians a potential casus belli as explosive as any in the relationship between Serbs, Croats and Bosnians.

The West has not yet realised this. It still misreads the centrapetal tendency of re-integration of the Slav statesas another form of Russian imperialism.

It mistrusts any move towards a Ukrainian rapprochement with Russia.

Nato blunders into this ground at its and Russia's peril. Whatever wrongs the former Soviet Union perpetrated against Balts and Ukrainian speakers, Russia needs time to heal old wounds.

But moving gradually does not appear high on the agenda of the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright.

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The world press photo of the year, 1996, by the Italian Francesco Zizola, shows a centre set up for child victims of the Angolan civil war after the capital, Quito, was besieged for nine months by Unita rebel troops. Many of the children were maimed by undetected land mines in the area

Long retreat of Afghans' hopes for peace

On the anniversary of the Soviet withdrawal, **Suzanne Goldenberg** in Khinjan talks to a Russian straggler about the search for salvation

EIGHT years ago today General Boris Gromov, the commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, walked across a bridge spanning the Amu Darya river.

His solitary jeep was the last of the thousands of tanks, troop carriers and other vehicles that trundled northwards across the Soviet border, ending Leonid Brezhnev's nine-year battle to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and entrench communism in the lands south of his empire.

The retreating general left behind near total desolation: a third of the Afghans had been driven into exile, and millions of land mines had been planted in fields and orchards.

He also left behind Alexey Olenin or, as he is now know, Rahimatullah.

Mr Olenin was in the last three months of his two-year tour of duty in Afghanistan when a fuel tanker he was driving north along the Salang pass broke down near the village of Khinjan, and he fell behind the convoy.

He says he held off mojahedin attackers for more than an hour, cowering in his cab with only an AK assault rifle, before he and seven comrades were taken prisoner.

He and another soldier embraced Islam — on the day Brezhnev died, November 10 1982 — and settled here. One was killed in retribution when he returned to his unit, his skull crushed by a tank, Mr Olendin says, and five eventually found their way home.

'Blood cannot be washed by blood. Please tell the world to stop interfering'

But not Mr Olenin: he travelled with the mojahedin as a medic.

For eight years his family in the Volga river town of Samara did not know whether he was alive or dead.

He returned to Samara in 1993, reassured by the amnesty Mikhail Gorbachev granted army deserters, but was greeted with hostility by local people for whom the Soviet Union was still alive. They considered him a traitor.

"I was afraid the real Socialist people would want to kill me," he says.

He says he is still a Russian, but a curious change has happened within him — he no longer has an entirely Russian soul. And yet he cannot renounce the former Soviet Union.

"During Brezhnev's time, Russia wanted to bring communism and progress to Afghanistan," he says.

"They had 15 republics and wanted one more, but they would also have brought progress here. In the new Russia, people think only of themselves."

A year ago he began an unhappy marriage to an Afghan woman called Nargis. "She cast a spell on me," he says.

A few weeks ago robbers destroyed his modest shop selling sweets and tea in the town of Pul-i-Khomri, and now he ekes out a living as a pedlar.

Exploiting the wide differences in local food prices, he hitches rides in northern Afghanistan with a sackful of bitter oranges on his shoulder and a copy of the Koran nestled against his heart in an envelope of red cotton.

We drive past winter wheat beginning to sprout in the fields, and then a tank.

He shudders: "When I see such things, my heart fills with hatred, because they bring only darkness to the world.

"For 15 years, I have been looking for justice, humanity and honesty and I have found only enemies."

His despair has a broader parallel. In the 1980s the United States, Saudi Arabia and Iran sent arms worth billions of pounds to the mojahedin rebels through Pakistan's intelligence agencies.

Like Brezhnev, they did not bring stability or peace to Afghanistan, or halt the spread of militant Islam, as the success of the Taliban, which now controls two-thirds of the country, proves.

The United States gave tacit approval two years ago to Pakistan's support of the Taliban, against the advice of local diplomats, and Iran, Russia and Uzbekistan have lined up with the Taliban's opponents, led by General Abdul Rashid Dostam, whose hold in the north has grown tenuous.

Soviet power is no longer at stake, but rather the lucrative trade routes, including those for heroin, to Central Asia. To the West, installing a stable government is essential before an oil pipeline can be built across Afghanistan.

Since 1992 the mojahedin's former backers have spent on food aid and reconstruction less than 1 per cent of what they once spent on arms.

This year the United Nations called for £83 million for food aid and other assistance, but has little chance of reaching its target.

Last year the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan collected just over half the £77 million it asked for.

The ironies are not lost on Afghans. Despite the divisions that have torn their country in the past eight years, they say peace would be possible if they were left alone.

"Blood cannot be washed by blood. Please tell the world to stop interfering here," says Mr Olenin's Afghan companion.

Mr Olenin says that at 34 he is too old to start a third life. He knows that the Taliban is closing in, and it is unlikely that the force that brutally executed the country's former communist leader Mohammed Najibullah will spare such a visible symbol of the Soviet occupation.

"They will bring this country back 100 years," he says.

If he could, he would make his way to Iran, where he believes he could find real Islam, and peace.

"God has given me the patience of the ocean. I can accept anything," he says.

Firing squad for the voice of genocide

Karamira struck terror throughout Rwanda with his broadcasts, writes **Chris McGreal**

FRODUALD Karamira has gripped Rwanda's attention for the last time. Even his imminent death will be an anticlimax in comparison to the performances which led him to a firing squad.

A Kigali court sentenced Karamira to death yesterday as a ringleader of the 1994 genocide of hundreds of thousands of Rwanda's Tutsis.

"He has war crimes on his head. He was leading the militia, guiding them here and killing even his own neighbours," Judge Jariel Rutaremara said.

Three years ago, Karamira struck terror across the country with his radio broadcasts calling for mass murder. Today he is the highest ranking of the murderous extremists in the custody of Rwanda's new rulers.

For three days last month Karamira again fascinated Rwandans with a performance which swung from defiant denial of an appalling reality to a final, almost bizarre, act of contrition.

"If my death will bring reconciliation, if my death will make some people happy, then I'm not afraid to die," he told the judges who took two weeks to decide his guilt.

To many Tutsis, Karamira's performance symbolised the Hutu majority's frustrating lack of remorse for the genocide. And while there may have been a time for forgiveness, blood is once again being spilled in Rwanda and Tutsis are crying out for vengeance in part out of fear of a repeat of the past.

During the trial, hundreds of Rwandans — Tutsis and Hutus — elbowed their way into the Kigali courtroom within sight of a stadium where Karamira had whipped up the killing. The spectators packing the wooden benches jostled with irritable soldiers for a view of the short, stocky 47-year-old prisoner, dressed ridiculously in a bright pink prison uniform.

Most of Rwanda followed the trial on the radios on which they had heard Karamira's call to murder.

The judge's measured tones and the witnesses' tragic accounts reached homes, shops and cars throughout the capital. But it was Karamira's testimony that drew the crowds.

Many who listened were outraged. Some had expected a broken man, grovelling for mercy. But he was only a little less defiant than during the days when he led the killing. There had been no organised genocide, Karamira insisted to the judges, only spontaneous tribal massacres on both sides, and he knew nothing about them.

Confronted with the terrifying broadcasts of his rallies, he claimed that the transcripts had been misedited. Absurdly, he denied that he was even present, claiming that he was at home in his village.

Many questions went unanswered, particularly why this man, who was born a Tutsi and assimilated himself as a Hutu only later in life, had been such an enthusiastic sponsor of the slaughter of his people.

Three days, they felt, was too long to try a man they knew was guilty

Karamira said he refused to recognise the legitimacy of the government, because it did not include members of the Hutu extremist party which led the killing. He rejected the court as a farce and his trial as a sham.

"As a politician, I would say I have no confidence in the system of justice here. As a man I would say the same thing as well," he said. "I wish they would finish it ... This process is so slow."

The spectators grumbled that three days was much too long for the trial of a man everyone knew was guilty. They wondered how the courts would ever get through the other 80,000 alleged killers packing Rwanda's squalid jails if every trial were to take days.

Yet there were those who understood. As the most prominent of the organisers of the genocide in custody in Rwanda, Karamira's trial was not solely an account of his crimes. It was a record to ensure that the genocide could never be denied.

Web surfers steered towards new video age

Kevin Wilson

A NEW software program unveiled in New York will allow anyone with a standard computer to watch live video on the World Wide Web — or broadcast their own videos on the global network.

Surfers can currently access crackly sound and jerky pictures from live events on the Web, the graphical face of the Internet.

With the new software, however, picture quality is much better — though not yet rivalling television broadcasts — and users will need no special telephone link.

What is more, the increasingly large number of people with a Web site can use the software to broadcast their own footage from their front room. To do this before required a hefty investment in equipment.

The telecommunications industry has long hoped that video-on-demand — the ability to order and watch feature films piped in to television sets via a telephone or cable link — will be the service that attracts the public in sufficient numbers to fund an expansion of its networks.

RealVideo, the new software from Progressive Networks, in Seattle, cannot rival this yet. It will allow ordinary computers to display live images, though not at the size or quality of a television broadcast.

But improvements are bound to follow, and the system could eventually allow television stations to broadcast live news footage on their Web sites rather than via cable networks.

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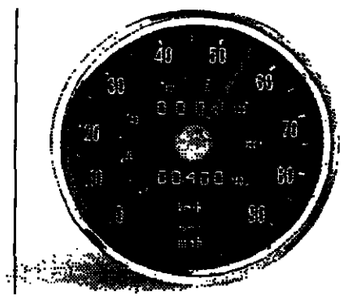

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Nora Beloff

A thick skin and insatiable curiosity

IN 1964 Nora Beloff, who has died aged 78, became the first female political correspondent of a major British newspaper, a pioneering distinction that meant little to her. She took greater pride in the fact that she was uniquely qualified for the job, having spent the two previous decades as the Observer's correspondent in Paris, Washington and Moscow.

She was a tiny woman of terrier-like tenacity who always seemed to be in a hurry. Essentially a cold war liberal, she was a crusader by temperament and conviction, whether pursuing Trotskyists in the Labour Party, exposing the plight of Soviet Jews, defending the Serbs or fighting the trade union closed shop for journalists. She was brave in championing causes that made her unpopular and sometimes exposed her to ridicule and physical danger. In her sixties she was arrested in the Soviet Union, and expelled from Yugoslavia after a grilling by the secret police.

Her energy in pursuing divisions within the Labour government led the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, to summon her editor, David Astor, to Downing Street in a forlorn attempt to get her sacked. He also hinted that he was having her followed to find out who her sources were.

During her Moscow spell she caused so much trouble to the authorities that when I went there many years later to ask for the Observer's accreditation to be restored, the apparatchik muttered, in remembered dismay, "Nora Beloff, Nora Beloff..." When I made him understand that she had left the paper under my editorship, I was treated like a hero of the Soviet Union and the red tape was magically cut.

Her international experience gave her a wider frame of reference than her male colleagues at Westminster, an advantage she did not hide from them. Like many trailblazing women, she attracted snide comments. In her case this led to a reputation, not wholly undeserved, for getting things wrong. This attitude was once expressed in her hearing in the Commons by Michael Foot, who drew loud laughter and applause when he said: "Honourable members may say that if Nora Beloff says it positively and with assurance, one could be quite sure the opposite is almost certain to be true."

A fellow lobby correspondent, Frank Johnson, came closer to the truth, when he wrote: "On large matters — as opposed to details of names, dates and the like — I would wager her record of accuracy to be as good as most of her competitors". Her main offence, he pointed out, was that she was a good deal cleverer than they. Her reporting on Trotskyist infiltration of the Labour Party in the late 1960s and early 1970s — later shown to have been substantially correct — angered some colleagues on the paper to the point where they complained to Astor through the National Union of Journalists.

As "Ballsoff", she became a favourite butt of Private Eye, which was fed snippets about her by jealous colleagues. She successfully sued the magazine for libel when Auberon Waugh jestingly implied that she had slept with the entire Conservative Cabinet, but she lost a more celebrated case against it when she was unwisely advised to sue for breach of copyright when Private Eye published an office memorandum containing off-the-record information from a cabinet minister. The case, which she lost on a technicality, set a damaging precedent for freedom of the press.

'The right choice' ... Nora Beloff, the first female political correspondent of the Observer PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BOWN

Nora could be a sore trial to the Observer's executives and to sub-editors cross-checking every fact in her copy. She had an annoying habit of getting her own way. Even when she seemed to have been comprehensively defeated in conference, she would sometimes persuade the editor, David Astor, to her point of view when he drove her to work in the car.

It was a miracle that her column ever reached printed form, since she could barely type and took no serious interest in the craft of writing. She prevailed upon friendly colleagues to convert her frenzied scrawl into a publishable story. Sometimes she could be heard in the newsroom, late on a Saturday afternoon, long after her deadline, desperately dictating her column to the copytakers from scraps of paper.

She came to an unusual arrangement with her Sunday Times opposite number whereby they exchanged each other's stories in mid-afternoon, to ensure that neither would be taken by surprise. The arrangement came to light when she wandered nonchalantly over to the news desk and told them what the rival paper would be leading on. She was baffled by the managing editor's resulting apoplexy.

The fact that she had met most world leaders and had been present at nearly every major post-war event gave her a self-confidence and lack of deference for British politicians unusual among lobby correspondents of the time. A choice amusement was to overhear her haranguing politicians on the telephone. She once wrote of herself: "Journalism was obviously the right choice. I had the necessary qualifications: inexhaustible stamina, insatiable curiosity and a thick skin."

She was born in London, the middle child of five, into the intellectual Beloff clan and named after the heroine of Ibsen's *The Doll's House*. Her parents were Russian Jews. Nora herself was agnostic and renounced her mother's passionate Zionism. She read history at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and then joined the Foreign Office's political intelligence department and was sent to the Paris embassy; this was followed by spells with Reuters, the Economist and the Manchester Guardian before she became the Observer's Paris corrrespondent in 1947. In the 1950s she moved to Washington and Moscow and held the political job from 1961-76. She was never happy with the paper after Astor's retirement, when I replaced her as political correspondent. She left in 1978 after a period as a roving reporter in Europe.

Her manner of leaving was typically dramatic. She wrote two letters — one a bland note to me, the other to the Americans who had bought the Observer, urging them to appoint another editor. Unfortunately for her, she put the letters in the wrong envelopes.

Neither retirement nor illness slowed her down. She travelled widely and wrote five books, of which the first, *The General Said No*, was a vivid account of the abortive negotiations for British entry into the Common Market, and the last was *Tito's Flawed Legacy*.

Nora had a romantic side that few outside her family ever saw. And when she was 58 her colleagues were amazed when she suddenly married Clifford Makins, the Observer's gifted but somewhat shambolic sports editor. He died in 1990.

For all her quirks Nora Beloff had one of the most distinguished careers any woman has had in British journalism, an achievement that deserved greater recognition than she received from her peers.

Donald Trelford

David Astor writes: Nora Beloff was what might be called a pure journalist. Her loyalty was to the truth, even if that meant offending her preferred political party, her newspaper, the lobby system, the National Union of Journalists, or the British ambassador of the country where she might be based. Her most courageous role in home politics was in denouncing the left wing of Labour's grip on the party before it was fashionable to do so. This earned her almost isolation within our office.

She made a journey into the Soviet Union as a freelance to investigate persecution in Georgia and on her way out was arrested. She managed to phone the Ambassador and to get away without revealing her sources. Her last freelance enterprise was to challenge the reputation of Marshal Tito and that of his British wartime supporters and to write a book challenging the Western belief that the Serbs were the chief villains in the Bosnian war.

She was a loyal friend and a wonderful colleague when courage and independence were needed.

Nora Beloff, journalist, born January 24, 1919; died February 12, 1997

André Franquin

Lion of the cartoon strip

ANDRE Franquin, who has died aged 73, was certainly the best known and most respected strip cartoonist across the Francophone world since Hergé, the creator of Tintin.

Although his cartoon creations, notably the subversive, scruffy, office boy Gaston Lagaffe and the extraordinary wild creature Marsupilami — half chimp, half leopard — are virtually unknown in this country, Franquin had a revered status in his native Belgium, where they take the art of the *bande dessinée* extremely seriously.

The great Hergé himself, like Franquin a self-deprecatory figure, once said of his junior competitor: "He's a great artist, by the side of whom I am just a mediocre illustrator."

Franquin, who like Hergé was born in Brussels, was a shy and retiring man, subject to bouts of depression. However, he escaped the fate his humourless bank official father had in mind for him, to become an agricultural engineer, by going to art school. He discovered his true vocation when asked to illustrate the fables of La Fontaine.

There were burgeoning opportunities for strip cartoonists in Belgian magazines then and a 50-year career as a cartoonist followed. In those days the publication Spirou, where he made his name, sold seven million albums a year and its publishing house had 30 per cent of the Francophone strip cartoon market.

Although Franquin's output diminished towards the end of his life, the 15th volume of Gaston's adventures was published last November, in time for the Christmas trade.

A large statue of Gaston was unveiled outside Brussels's immensely serious and reverent strip cartoon museum last year, with Franquin reluctantly in attendance.

GASTON Lagaffe (as in mistake), was first drawn in 1957 and spent the next 40 years as a spanner in the works of the office where his adventures are set — and as a spiky commentary on the world of bureaucracy, management and the concept of productivity. Marsupilami is a peculiar yellow jungle creature with a bemused expression, black spots, elastic arms and legs and an enormous interior-sprung tail like the suspension of a Citroen car. Merchandising deals mean he is seen all over Belgium and France, either attached to the back windows of cars, or as tote bags hauled round by children. Selling the rights to Disney did not lead to the character being developed for English-speaking audiences, as the anarchic humour clearly did not travel as far as California.

Half chimp, half leopard ... Franquin's Marsupilami

Franquin created other characters, including the idiot savant Zorglub and the Count of Champignac, who grew distinctly unusual mushrooms in his château. And there were also, from the 1970s onwards, the *Idées Noires* (the black thoughts) in which Franquin unleashed a pessimistic view of a world dominated by pollution, genocide and despair drawn in a style reminiscent of Mervyn Peake. In Franquin's opinion there was increasingly less to laugh about.

Stephen Bates

André Franquin, cartoonist, born January 3, 1924; died January 5, 1997

Eve Lister

Plucked from the chorus

OF ALL the actresses and singers who could lay claim to being one of Mr Cochran's young ladies, Eve Lister, who has died aged 83, was one of the most charming and good natured. These were the qualities she brought to an era of musical theatre rather different to that of the present. Her last important West End appearance was in the mid-1960s as Anna — a highly praised performance — in *The King and I* in Drury Lane.

Her London debut was as a 19-year-old, recruited by the celebrated impresario C B Cochran for Noël Coward's *Words and Music* at the Adelphi Theatre in 1932. She had already appeared as a child in pantomime — a form of entertainment for which she would become a lasting favourite — at the Grand Theatre, Brighton. Cochran had picked her out of the chorus line, and so liked her in the Coward review that he gave her the part of a Bavarian girl in his 1933 production of Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern's *Music in the Air* at His Majesty's Theatre.

In the mid-1930s she devoted four years to films under the direction of John Baxter and appeared in *Birds of a Feather*, *Sunshine Ahead*, *The Girl in the Crowd* and *A Glimpse of Paradise*. In Todd Slaughter's film, *Sweeney Todd*, she played a girl who dressed up as a boy to get into the murderous barber's shop and obtain evidence which would bring about the villain's downfall.

It was during the second world war that she firmly established herself in pantomime, performing extensively in the provinces. In 1947, with the war over, she appeared as Prince Charming in *Cinderella* at the Casino in the West End. Buttons was the diminutive comedian Arthur Askey.

The previous year she had played Gabrielle Girard in the popular composer Ivor Novello's production of *The Lisbon Story* and, confirming her affinity with innocent humour, she appeared with the famous comedian Will Hay and Nervo and Knox of the Crazy Gang, in *For Crying Out Loud* at the Stoll Theatre.

When she introduced Marlene Dietrich in cabaret at the Café de Paris, she so pleased the star that Dietrich returned the compliment later by introducing her. But Eve Lister kept her contact with innocent, fairly broad humour with the outsize comedian Fred Emney in *Happy as a King*, having appeared with him in cabaret.

Her reign as a singer and actress persisted into the 1950s, when, before replacing Valerie Hobson in *The King and I* she appeared in a long run of the hugely popular *Blue for a Boy*.

Lister came from a theatrical family based in Brighton. Both her parents were actors; Nellie Taylor, the musical comedy actress, was an aunt and a grandmother ran a concert party at Hove.

Innocent charm ... Eve Lister as Anna in *The King and I*

She was married twice, first to Hugh French, by whom she had a son, and then to Bernard Hunter who survives her. Both were theatrical agents.

Dennis Barker

Eve Lister, actress and singer, born December 12, 1913; died Jan 31, 1997

Wallace Bell

IN THE 1960s Wallace Bell, who has died aged 77, ran refugee programmes that led to the resettlement of up to 8,000 people annually. He was director of the World Council of Churches refugee service covering Greece and Egypt.

Born in Tynemouth, after the local grammar school, Bell studied law and economics at London University in the late 1930s. During the war he was secretary of Christian Land Units. From 1946 to 1962 he was organizing secretary of the Council for Christians and Jews, an adviser on the establishment of the first local committees on race relations and editor of CCJ's periodical, Common Ground.

From 1971 when he returned to England until his 1986 retirement, Wallace was director of the Industrial Participation Association. He transformed it into a national organisation. His works during that time included *Profit Sharing and Profitability*, co-written with Charles Hanson, *Industrial Participation*, and after he retired, the IPA's *Profit Sharing Register*.

Wallace was awarded an OBE for his services to industry and employment. His sense of fairness was underpinned by his Christian faith. It made him a formidable opponent — and a good friend. He is survived by his American second wife, Karen, and a daughter and two sons from his first marriage.

Bryan Stevens

David Wallace Bell, refugee resettlement and industrial relations expert, born February 22, 1919; died January 10, 1997

Face to Faith

God's more lenient view of Lent

Christina Rees

WHEN I was 19 years old, I once went for two weeks without eating. It was during Lent, and my forswearing of food was an attempt to purge and purify myself in readiness for Easter. My abstinence certainly purified my body, but, spiritually, it was a dismal failure. Instead of concentrating more on God, which had been my intention, I found myself more absorbed with the changes taking place in my body and, to my shame, I grew proud of my self-control.

I don't undertake lengthy fasts like that any more. These days, 24 hours is about all I manage, and my attitude has changed from one of seeing how long I can be strict with myself, to one of making more time in my life to be quiet, to think and to pray. The challenge is not to carry on as usual, but to detach myself for a short time and to stop all the activity — mental and physical.

Traditionally, Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter, is a reminder of the 40 days' fast of Jesus in the wilderness, a time when he withstood fierce temptations. Lent is also a time for remembering baptismal vows, and some Lenten liturgies contain references to water, being raised from the dead, and light — all baptismal themes. But it tends to be primarily a time for penitence, for giving up simple pleasures, like drinking or sweets, to focus more on God. There is also a wealth of Lenten devotional reading available, as well as special study guides or cassettes, and many churches hold weekly Lent groups and quiet days.

I have nothing against penitence, fasting or confession, indeed, Christians are exhorted to do such things, but there has always been something about Lent that has made me nervous, and I don't think it's just the prospect of a wine and chocolate-free six weeks.

I think my anxiety has to do with the fact that many Christians were brought up with a view of an angry deity who constantly needed to be appeased, and the rather petty, superficial sacrifices that most of us make for Lent, resonate uncomfortably with this concept of God.

Scratch the surface of too many Christians and an almost nightmarish understanding of God is revealed. Instead of a Creator motivated by love for us, out comes a reaction to a critical, spiteful and calculating Being: the big, bad joker in the sky. Certainly, Yahweh of the Old Testament did judge his people and express his jealousy, wrath and vengeance when they turned their backs on him or when they went against his laws. He also protected, loved and comforted them. One could be forgiven for thinking that this God's love was very much conditioned by the behaviour of his people.

The most significant changes from the Old Testament to the New are concerned precisely with the new relationship with God that Jesus demonstrates in his own life and which He makes possible for others. This is the heart of the Gospel — the good news: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." (John, 3, v 16-17.)

NO LONGER will a relationship with God be based on a set of rules — the law, but on the grace and love of God given through his Spirit. This was Paul's great theme and message of liberation to the early church in Rome, when he wrote: "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." (St Paul's letter to the Romans, 7, 8.)

All our striving to win God's favour is shown not only to be impossible, but, because of Jesus, to be unnecessary. We cannot do anything for God. Rather, we are to respond to God, with the confidence that his reaching out to us is motivated by love. If I believe this, then I will quite naturally repent of my sins, and I will ask for forgiveness and know myself to be forgiven (and I will also be able to forgive others). If I cannot respond to God's love, then my faith will seem like a chore, not like the dynamic relationship of mutual delight that it is supposed to be, and it will feel like Lent all year round.

This is what I believe, but this is not always how I behave. I still behave as if I have got to be a bit careful with God — just in case. That is why this Lent I intend not to put myself through the annual ritual of trivial self-denial. Instead, I will deny myself the unholy luxuries of self-loathing and of doubting God's love for me. Accepting myself as a child of God, I will allow myself the freedom to be spontaneous, to bask in his love, to be joyful. If my suspicions about God are correct, then this should actually bring me closer to God than if I were to fast for the entire 40 days.

Christina Rees is a member of the Church of England's General Synod and chair of Women And The Church (Watch)

Weekend birthdays

FEISTY is the word that comes to mind as we wish Labour's Clare Short — 51 today — a happy birthday but she's too rooted in reality to be much impressed by zeitgeist chatter. And, of course, it's that firm anchor that keeps her bouncing back. You'd think that someone who'd been through one unhappy marriage, seen the second blighted by Alzheimer's, and been booted out of the shadow cabinet might not have much to look forward to. On the contrary, insiders report Clare padding round the Commons in stockinged feet, passionate and straight-talking as ever, looking forward to a Labour government. There will be limited glory in that for her — as overseas development minister, she'll have a department but not a cabinet post. But what the hell, she'll have a world canvas to campaign for human rights and against poverty on, and, if things get rough, she'll retreat to Birmingham, in her view the true centre of the universe.

In fact, it's been the happiest year of her recent life. Last October's reunion with her long-lost son, Toby, is *Secrets And Lies* stuff for real. Colleagues say she seems more

delighted (and delightful) than they've ever known her. As she herself might say, it's the sort of thing that puts politics in perspective.

Today's other birthdays: **Clive Aslet**, editor, Country Life, 42; **Sir Harold Beeley**, historian and former ambassador, 88; **Claire Bloom**, actress, 66; **Derek Conway**, MP, Government Whip, 44; **Dan Crompton**, inspector of constabulary, 56; **Frank Dunlop**, theatre director, 70; **Paul Ferris**, author, 68; **Troy Kennedy Martin**, screenwriter, 65; **Jane Seymour**, actress, 46.

Tomorrow's birthdays: **Patti Andrews**, singer, 77; **Paul Bailey**, novelist, 60; **Iain Banks**, novelist, 43; **Robin Clark**, FRS, professor of chemistry, University College, London, 62; **Anthony Dowell**, director, Royal Ballet, 54; **John Graham (Araucaria)**, crossword compiler, 76 **David Griffiths**, portrait painter, 58; **Peter Hain**, Labour MP, 47; **Peter Hobday**, broadcaster, 60; **Mike Holding**, cricketer, 43; **Eliahu Inbal**, conductor, 60; **Ian Lavender**, actor, 51; **John McEnroe**, tennis player, 38; **Peter Porter**, poet, 68; **Howard Riley**, jazz pianist, 54; **John Schlesinger**, film director, 71; **Andy Taylor**, rock guitarist, 36; **Sir Peter Webster**, Maxwell pension fund mediator, 73.

Death Notices

CONSTABLE, Charles, suddenly at home on Friday, February 7th aged 92. Much loved husband of Gladys and a dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather. A burial service will be held at Hardmead Church in Bedfordshire on Saturday February 22nd. Enquiries to 01234 712576

In Memoriam

ROSS, Marjorie. School teacher died 15 February 1996. Deeply mourned and sadly missed by her devoted Harold, loving sister Muriel and many friends.

■ To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

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Trial by the Daily Mail

Time for a cheer?

IT'S either a sincere conversion or a cynical stunt. Yesterday, the Daily Mail cleared its front page and identified — by name and photographs — five white youths whom it accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence, the black teenager who was stabbed to death in a racist attack in south-east London almost four years ago. The paper rightly notes that a criminal case, a private prosecution and a coroner's court have all come to an end without justice being done. No one has been convicted of the horrific crime, even though the jury at this week's inquest concluded that Stephen Lawrence was unlawfully killed in a "completely unprovoked racist attack by five white youths". Four of the five youths named by the Mail have refused to provide an alibi for the night of the murder. One gave an alibi but it did not stand up. All five refused to answer any questions at this week's inquest, citing their legal right not to say anything which might incriminate them. In the words of the Mail: "It is no light matter when a national newspaper condemns as murderers five men who have never been convicted in court. But when the judicial system has failed so lamentably to deal with the killers of Stephen Lawrence, extraordinary measures are demanded."

Critics condemned the Mail for "trial by media" and derided the paper's defence that the five named youths were free to clear their names by suing for libel. It is hardly an even playing field. There is no legal aid for libel — an elementary fact of which the Mail's deputy editor seemed unaware in his interview on the BBC's World at One yesterday. How do five uneducated school drop-outs take on a newspaper as powerful as the Mail? More serious, the paper carried out little investigation of its own nor unearthed any significant new facts. Its indictment was based largely on police belief. But the police are not always right. That is the purpose of a trial: to ensure the prosecution's evidence is fully tested.

Cynics can also point to a very belated conversion by the Mail. Until yesterday, the Mail's coverage of the shameful killing had been somewhat peripheral. The murder was only mentioned in three stories in the last year before the inquest, only six the previous year, and just 20 since the murder was committed. Moreover, compare yesterday's leader with the paper's editorial shortly after the murder which, while hoping the guilty would be caught, was quick to sneer at the supporters campaigning for the Lawrence family: "What is not helpful is the gusto with which the more militant of the anti-racist organisations have hijacked this human tragedy. The black African leader Nelson Mandela was enlisted, while on a visit here, to give publicity to the case. Racism is abominable ... but is there not also something contemptible about professional protesters who capitalise on grief to fuel confrontation?"

Whatever the motive — and let us assume sincerity — yesterday's edition was a powerful and bold stroke. If newspapers are rightly praised for campaigning on behalf of people wrongly convicted by the criminal justice system, then surely they deserve support for pursuing the other category of miscarriage of justice: people wrongly found innocent. When the Mail is ready to have a go at racists, it is time to cheer. Four of the five named killers are known to be racists — they were surreptitiously videoed by the police. Of course, being a racist does not mean you are a killer. That is why the Mail exercise would be even more impressive if they were ready to forgo claiming any costs in a libel trial. That would provide a more even playing field — and another opportunity for the five youths to answer some awkward questions.

Killers at the wheel

Something can and must be done

ROAD accidents are one of the biggest avoidable causes of death. Considerable progress has been made in curbing drinking and driving and the recent introduction of roadside cameras has started to reduce the number of pedestrians killed by futile speeding. But there are two other major causes of unnecessary deaths and accidents which need urgent attention and both concern drivers. The first is mobile-phone abuse. A survey of 700 drivers published this week showed that motorists using mobile phones were four times more likely to have accidents than those without including those using hands-free phones. The survey — published in the New England Journal of Medicine — concluded that such phones made accidents more likely not because drivers' hands were occupied but because they were distracted. There's only one solution — abuse of mobile phones must be made a clear offence.

The second cause of needless accidents is driver fatigue. We all know the symptoms even if far too many of us are reluctant to admit them. There's a sudden onrush of drowsiness we try to ignore thinking it will go away. It doesn't. We strain our heads in an overdose of concentration thinking we can overcome it and not wanting to admit to passengers that their safety might be imperilled. We may even fall asleep for a moment or two without realising it. It could be that someone else travelling in the opposite direction at 70mph in the other lane of the same carriageway is also struggling to stay awake. It's a madness that isn't alleviated by familiarity. Studies by the Sleep Research Laboratory at the University of Loughborough suggest that 16 to 23 per cent of major accidents are caused by driver fatigue. Mid-afternoon is the most dangerous period and male drivers under 30 the main victims.

What can be done? The Department of Transport recommends that drowsy drivers stop driving. That's common sense but the message won't get through unless it is rammed home through a concerted media campaign. And, even if the message does get through, it's not always easy on motorways (unlike in France) to find somewhere to pull in to take a cat-nap. Loughborough says that taking caffeine can help. Some companies like Renault are starting to manufacture gizmos — like a dashboard-mounted camera that monitors eye movements — to give early warning. All of these suggestions are helpful, but they won't change national attitudes phones or fatigue. For that to happen we need a national campaign on the scale that has successfully changed attitudes to drinking and driving. This is one of those few areas where politicians could make a big contribution to saving lives if they themselves could overcome their usual complaint of political fatigue.

Letters to the Editor

How to clean up the world

MICHAEL Meacher paints a largely depressing picture of a polluted world facing ever-increasing levels of environmental abuse (Backlash awaits the sleepwalkers, Society, February 12). The facts speak for themselves and you can have some more.

The average British family is responsible for 20 tonnes of carbon dioxide being pumped into the air every year. There is a risk of around 60 hospital admissions every time there is a severe bout of pollution. Each car's acid emissions are responsible for three dead trees and 30 "sick" ones.

But all is not doom. Too many people seem to think whatever they do will not make a difference — but it will. They slag off official policies, then drive 300 yards to pick up a newspaper; mutter about the motives of big business, then toss litter in the street; rant and rave about "so-called experts", then empty motor oil down the drain. It's the little actions that matter.
(Prof) Graham Ashworth.
Chairman, Going for Green.
56 Oxford Street,
Manchester M60 7HJ.

IN THE case of traffic pollution, something *could* be done. In the US, reformulated petrol significantly reduces benzene, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide and also helps to reduce nitrogen oxides and ground-level ozone. In Finland, Sweden, Italy and France, these fuels are being encouraged by tax incentives and other legislation. Surely what is appropriate for these countries is also appropriate for the UK?

Reformulated petrol would cost around 0.6p a litre more at the pump than conventional petrol. But consumers could be encouraged to adopt it by the same methods that encouraged the take-up of unleaded petrol so successfully.
M Dawson.
Clean-Air Through Oxygen.
24-28 Bloomsbury Way,
London WC1A 2PX.

EVEN though Labour has some reasonable environmental policies, none of these is promoted or discussed by Mr Meacher. Why? We need policy commitments and the political will to act urgently. He does not offer these. This lack of leadership and courage is a feature of current political debate and is one of the reasons why the Real World Coalition was formed. Where does Mr Meacher stand on Real World's Action Programme for government?
Glenn Vowles.
85 Somerset Road,
Bristol BS4 2HX.

MICHAEL Meacher does not make clear what the Labour Party plans to do about these issues if it comes to power. We believe that reduction targets for all health-threatening pollutants should be set, based on precautionary WHO standards. We would urge Mr Meacher to say what new targets should be set to protect public health and enforce Labour's laudable aim of providing statutory environmental rights for all citizens.
Charles Secrett.
Executive Director,
Friends of the Earth.
26-28 Underwood Street,
London N1 7JQ.

WITH respect to Michael Meacher, it is simply not true that "since 1993, Drinking Water Inspectorate records reveal 350 serious drinking-water pollution incidents which were a significant risk to the health of water consumers". Mr Meacher has made this claim twice before.

More than three million water samples are tested every year. In 1995, 99.5 per cent complied to stringent standards. Of those which did not the Chief Inspector says: "There is no evidence that any of these contraventions was of such a magnitude or duration as to endanger health."

Nor is it true that more bathing waters failed to meet mandatory health standards last year than in the year before: 386 complied last year compared with 379 in 1995.

Water companies have been spending billions of pounds to maintain high-quality drinking water and to improve sewage treatment. As a result drinking water is the best it has ever been and is probably equal to the best in the world. And sewage treatment is contributing substantial improvements to the quality of rivers and coastal waters.
Janet Langdon.
Director,
Water Services Association.
1 Queen Anne's Gate,
London SW1H 9BT.

Howard abuses the system

SEVERAL features of a rational decision-making process are missing from Michael Howard's impending decision to allow the names and addresses of convicted sex offenders to be disclosed to neighbours (Report, February 12).

Firstly, nobody appears to have tried to show whether such a move would, in fact, protect vulnerable members of our communities (mainly children) from sexual assault. It seems likely that an individual intending to carry out such an attack will do so irrespective of his identity being known. He would surely move his operations outside his neighbourhood, thus making identification more difficult.

Secondly, such a system fails to address the problems at source, where risk of re-offending can be assessed and potentially diminished. In the distressing case of Megan Kanka, three known paedophiles were allowed to live together in the community. The failure to impose conditions on their behaviour after discharge must be in part to blame for the terrible events that followed.

I would concur with Labour that assessments of the risk of re-offending should be carried out. Such assessments, however, should result in a decision whether or not to release the offender and, if so, under what conditions — not (as Labour suggests) a decision to disclose the offender's identity to the public.
Adam Sargant.
Harlans Close,
Milton Keynes MK6.

IT is right that convicted sex offenders, such as paedophiles, be closely supervised and their names given to schools and other organisations where children go, but not to allow, or indeed encourage, these people to change is a denial of the most basic moral and religious principles.

There may well be a case for not releasing certain categories of sex offenders into the community until the authorities are satisfied that there has been a cure of their condition. This policy clearly has its risks, as no one can ever be 100 per cent sure that a sex offender won't re-offend. But it is a risk worth taking — and I say this as someone who has been raped, so I know the damage sexual offenders can cause.

Paedophilia and sexual violence present extremely difficult challenges to our society but we must find a way to heal and cure these conditions rather than simply turn over the issue to mob rule.
Simenon Honoré.
Clermont Road,
Brighton, E Sussex BN1.

Sing a song for England

AS for a new and specifically English anthem (A fresh song for England, Leader, Februry 13), there can only be one choice. I'm sure the English rugby and football teams would relish the thought of the Archers theme tune.
Keith Davidson.
59 Balfour Street,
Edinburgh EH6 5DP.

ONE needs a song with rhythm to keep the warmed-up muscles motivated, a chant the crowd can belt out and good vowel sounds to help the words along. England might gain from a morris dance with a short, succinct verse repeated once.
Jenny Sager.
109 Redland Road,
Redland, Bristol BS6 6QY.

LAND Of Hope And Glory, Rule Britannia, Jerusalem; any of these would do more to instil pride in one's country than the dirge which is God Save The Queen. Surely the whole point is to praise the nation, not an individual who by accident of birth happens to be there for the time being.
Brian Harris.
15 Castle Street,
Nether Stowey,
Somerset TA5 1LN.

BRITAIN has three national anthems, chosen by popular will not by authority. The Welsh have Land Of My Fathers, the Scots have Flower o' Scotland and the English have Jerusalem. God Save The Queen need be played only in the presence of royalty.
Lionel Burman.
12 Albert Road,
West Kirby, Wirral L48 0RS.

MAY I suggest the music of the Hymn to Jupiter in Holst's Planet Suite, to which words other than "I vow to thee my country" may be written. In a larger context, the same words and music might be substituted for the present national anthem.
G D Cuddon.
81 Ainsbury Road,
Coventry CV5 6BA.

Readers take the lead in a lively revue of artistic ideas

ANOTHER MANIFESTO

IN THE late 1980s, I served on an arts policy advisory group for the Labour Party. At that time, Labour was proposing to double spending on the arts and I put forward a paper proposing an arts development fund as a means of distributing such funding. Its basic principles would, I feel, work equally well today (Let's breathe new life into the arts, February 3).

The emphasis would be on artistically developmental work and could be applied to by anyone, be they well-established arts producers, smaller organisations already in existence, or new initiatives backed by established arts institutions and referees.

"Development" would mean possibly the creation of arts provision where none existed before; it might mean a new departure from an established body — regional touring by a city-based organisation, for example, or the commissioning of new works by artists, composers and writers; and it would encourage artistic innovation and experiment.

It would necessarily be an annual project-by-project scheme but it would get genuine innovation off the ground, while keeping established institutions on their toes.
Steve Gooch.
Conaways, Langham Road,
Robertsbridge,
E Sussex TN32 5DT.

A LABOUR government should declare war on snobbery. I recommend that every LEA establish an agency staffed by the most experienced and thoughtful community arts workers in their area to develop a host of training programmes. Their job would be to work with teachers and others supporting young and working-class people in creating events. What needs to be challenged are the middle-/upper-class traits which have come to taint the world of the arts.
Nick Nuttgens.
6 Upper Mosscar Street,
Bradford BD3 9JS.

THE Conservatives have never been able to shake off their prejudice that the arts are only given contemporary meaning after they have been absorbed into the nation's past, ie as tradition and heritage. Labour also seems suspicious of the "contemporary". Yet the arts, before all else, belong in the present. For a Labour government to face up to this fact, it would first have to get over its historical distrust of the arts. As long as its political language remains socio-economic and financial, it will never be able to break out of its mould as the art-world's accountants.
Tony Gardner.
a.p.gardner@stud.man.ac.uk

Another Manifesto give readers a chance to inject constructive ideas into political debate. Another Manifesto, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER (fax 0171 837 4530; e-mail manifesto@guardian.co.uk)

Film folk leap to the defence of their festival

MOST people in the industry agreed that while the old London Film Festival was successful in important ways, it lacked focus, originality and quality control (Rival event threatens London Film Festival, February 13). However, the new London International Film Festival's plans don't address these problems.

For example, they propose a competition for best British film, to be awarded two months after the Edinburgh Film Festival's long-established Michael Powell Award for Best British Film. Yes, there's an upturn in the industry but a new rival to Edinburgh's work in British film (discovering My Beautiful Laundrette and the films of Bill Forsyth and Antonia Bird, championing Derek Jarman, etc) could be damaging and smacks of opportunism.

The British Film Institute, which part-funded the old LFF, is to review the scope and function of the 40-year-old event. That is really what's needed. The outcome should be a more distincitve film festival in London, rather than one which appears to be copying ideas done better elsewhere.
Mark Cousins.
Former Director,
Edinburgh International
Film Festival.
37 Newington Road,
Edinburgh EH9 1QR.

YOUR correspondent writes "upstart" of Sheila Whitaker's planned film festival. I call it piratical. It is a predatory raid on a vital area of the British Film Institute responsibilities. It would undermine an essential part of this country's organisation for promoting public appreciation of film culture and history.

One can only hope that any businesses tempted to sponsor a Whitaker festival will quickly abandon the idea and that the Arts Council will have nothing to do with this deplorable initiative.
Chris Cossey.
320 Kennington Road,
London SE11 4LD.

When truth goes up in smoke

RICHARD Thomas's comments about suing the tobacco industry (Breathtaking fraud, February 11) ignore the frauds which the industry perpetrates on society. Documents published in the Journal of the American Medical Association have shown that the industry was aware of the risks from its own researches in the 1960s and took a conscious decision to conceal the results. Despite this, it regularly funds events intended to cast doubt on the evidence and continues to sell cigarettes and publish advertisements in many countries (including airports in the UK) which carry no warnings whatsoever.

Responsible producers, faced with evidence of harm on the scale of cigarettes, withdraw their products until they have been made safe, but the tobacco industry has never even acknowledged the risks, let alone taken serious steps to protect the public.
Donald Reid.
Chief Executive,
Association for Public Health.
Hamilton House,
Mabledon Place,
London WC1H 9TX.

MAKING tobacco companies pay for the health consequences of their products is not an "intellectual fraud". It is one example of society finally presenting companies with the bill for what economists call "externalities" — the costs private economic activity imposes on the public. This is the logic underlying the environmental principle that the polluter pays.
J T Winkler.
28 St Paul Street, London N1 7AB.

A word from the (former) chairman

IT would be interesting to know whether the chairman of Unilever, Niall FitzGerald, has the formal support of his board for his remarks that Unilever would reconsider its future investment in this country if Britain failed to take part in the EMU (Report, February 12).

Certainly this was not the view of his predecessor, Sir Michael Perry, when he gave evidence to the House of Lords European Communities Committee on March 7 last year.

Sir Michael was asked by its chairman, Lord Barnett: "What action would you take if the Netherlands were inside [EMU] and the United Kingdom was not just out but had deliberately decided to stay out even though it met the criteria?"

Sir Michael replied: "We would take no action whatsoever. It would be a supremely irrelevant matter for us ... We would not change anything we do."
Anthony Cowgill.
British Management
Data Foundation,
Highfield, Longridge,
Sheepscombe GlO GL6 7QU.

A Country Diary

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE: The young badger lying on the footpath was dead. Her mouth still held the food she'd been eating, a mixture of grass and perhaps small insects. She was also frozen. In a slight deviation from the country code, we carried her home. This was to be our first experience of skinning an animal. We used a pair of scissors to snip the first hole over the breast bone. Then a very sharp knife to cut down the middle — the aim was to peel off the skin. The back legs were cut up the middle to join the body cut; the front legs were similarly tackled with cuts around the ears. The main problem was the layers of fat below the skin, particularly at the tail, where they carry their musk gland. In doing all this, we noticed that the nose was out of alignment — it looked as if it had been knocked.

The body was then carefully buried in a deep hole in the garden. All the strong, peculiarly badger smells stayed with the skin, which was rolled up and put at the back of the greenhouse. In the morning, it had vanished. We discovered it stuck in a hole which a fox had dug under the greenhouse, dislodging bricks in its enthusiasm. Luckily, it wasn't big enough for the job.

Curing the skin was the next job. An old countryman wouldn't touch it. "They're too dirty," he said. There seemed no point in mentioning badgers' careful bedding arrangements and lavatory pits. Prejudice is prejudice. He also told us what had happened to this one. Now the skin is lying in an old pail with borax, alum and salt. Before chemicals it would have been a mixture of woodash and mashed badger brain. The next task is to scrape off the fat.

AUDREY INSCH

Lifting the net curtain on a hardcore world

Mark Lawson

THE Sun's page 3 girl was still there yesterday, Valentine's Day hearts printed on her knickers, the one small item of clothing she was wearing. But, while the campaign against bottom-shelf exploitation of women in newsagents' shops has been unsuccessful, the struggle against top-shelf pornography seemed to have won a significant victory this week when W H Smith announced that it will no longer stock skin mags. This looked like a triumph for such women's groups as the Campaign Against Pornography, whose members have, in the past, chained themselves to the lower shelves at Smith's.

The shop denies that this is a fit of morality, arguing instead that the bottom has fallen out of the tit-and-bum market. But this explanation is, on the surface, even better for feminists. For Smith's to deny men what they still wanted to buy would be a victory by illiberal force; for men no longer to want to buy it would be a triumph of liberal reason.

Regrettably, it's unlikely that you'll meet many poor porn barons in the next few years. The market has not collapsed but — massively, lucratively — diversified. Some argue that pornography has simply shifted to the mainstream, middle-shelf publications. Certainly, newspapers like the Sport and magazines like For Him feature female poses of a raunchiness which would once have been within reach only of the long-armed shopper. The real development, though, is that naked babes on the page are yesterday's attraction. In new-generation porn, the wobbly bits actually wobble.

Some of this is provided by video shops but the clue to the real new territory of sex is to be found in publications still freely on sale in W H Smith. The February edition of Cable Guide magazine guides the viewer towards a sweaty handful of sex channels. These include Television X: "1.20: Booberella — A man finds a huge bra on the beach and decides he must find its owner". Then there is the Adult Channel — "12.40: Ebony Erotica — a lover's guide to sexual positions" — and Playboy Channel: "11.35: Latex and Lace".

A schedule, you suspect, to put the digits into digital television. At the back of the magazine is a full-page colour advertisement for the aforementioned Television X: "The Fantasy Channel. Hottest Adult TV. Discretion Assured When You Subscribe."

Men whose equipment has a really long reach can make use of the complete list of European television services available from Britain, printed in the February edition of What Satellite TV. Here, the delights of the Eurotica porn channel are outlined, along with Satisfaction Club TV ("Porn on Wed-Sat only"). An advertisement in the same issue suggests that subscribers to the Italian-based Satisfaction Club TV may soon have to put down the channel-changer while watching. "Fattela Tu! La prima televisione interrativa!" [Do it yourself! The first inter-active television!"] promises the commercial.

But these channels merely provide the subscriber with what is effectively their very own cheap motel bedroom. The real action is on the Internet, an electronic equivalent of Soho crossed with Amsterdam and then multiplied several times. The list of web-sites would have dirty macs flapping like a tent in a high gale. Hot and Wet! Amazing Anal Shots! Live Centrefolds! E:Mail to Nethabes! One come-on promises: "So if it's hot wet pussy you're looking for you've cum [sic] to the right place!" The free preview pages — viewable by any user of any age without restriction — include footage of fellatio and cunnilingus in most permutations.

One sex-based web-site alone had been visited 606,059 times by the time I made my excuses and logged-off yesterday, which may be the work of a small number of men with very sore fingers, but is still the kind of circulation figure to make a Hefner or a Guccione whimper. And this, experienced net-heads say, is the tamer stuff. Newsagents and satellite and cable operators have generally, for legal rather than moral reasons, observed the old theatrical injunction about not working with children and animals. On the Internet, however, no such discretion is in force.

Is this really moral progress? In fact, the free availability of porn mags in high-street newsagents allowed a primitive but effective restraint on their consumption. A considerable amount of nerve was required to make such a purchase, and ever more so as pornography became less and less socially acceptable. (The reputation of the poet Philip Larkin has never really recovered from the discovery of a cache of porn mags among his effects.) And, as sexual inadequates are often quite short — their lack of height being one of their perceived inadequacies — the top-shelf policy was an additional obstacle. Before they could get it up, they had to ask someone to get it down.

New technology has dissolved these difficulties. The porn user is now able to make an anonymous transaction with a keyboard, even hiding behind an assumed codename if they wish. The furtive wankers have been cured only of furtiveness. The screwed-up no longer need to screw up their courage. This electronic plain brown envelope is better than any paper one ever devised. Indeed, those who have driven porn mags from the newsagents might reflect in their victory, that, on the Internet, material several times more explicit than was ever permitted on a high dusty shelf is accessible by children, who are asked only to reassure the web-site with a click of a "Y" or an "N" that they are over 18. This must be the most cynical honour system ever devised.

Women's groups have always argued persuasively that restrictions on the availability of abortion would drive the practice underground with dangerous consequences. Yet, curiously, they do not seem to have realised that the same logical objection applied to their campaign against public pornography. The centre-spread has been driven into the back rooms and the byways of cyberspace.

The falling sales of porn mags may lead women to feel that men have finally, as they say, got it. The sad truth is that they are simply getting it somewhere else — and with knobs on.

A sea with troubles on its every shore

Commentary

Martin Woollacott

THE Mediterranean has always been a region whose countless tragedies and long international conflicts have led on to further struggles, hatreds, and wars. The hope was that this history could be superseded by an era in which it became what the 1995 Cannes summit of Mediterranean states called a "zone of peace, stability, and prosperity".

But the Mediterranean is increasingly a sea of troubles, and those troubles are hardly confined to the Muslim societies of its southern and eastern shores. The frame of mind apparent at Cannes and later at the Barcelona meeting of Mediterranean nations was one in which the societies of the northern shore helped those to the south head off disaster, whether demographic, political, or ecological. But National Front victories in the south of France, and recent demonstrations of the staying power of organised crime in parts of Spain, Italy, and the eastern Mediterranean, show how foolish it is to view this sea as a frontier between stability and chaos.

Both are present on both shores. If the southern Mediterranean displays the horrors of Algeria, or the cruel oddities of Libya, the northern shore has had the terrible spectacle of Bosnia. There have been the killings on the Cyprus green line, and now the dangerous idiocies of the Albanian pyramid scheme crisis. A common historical training in intolerance, and a failure to cope with the modern world, informs attitudes in places as diverse as Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Serbia, southern Italy, Corsica, Algeria, and even Spain (over Gibraltar). And the troubles mesh with one another. The National Front successes around Marseille spring out of a milder version of the same problems of under-development, obsolescence, and unemployment as does the strife in Algeria.

They also feature some of the same people. In parts of southern France two different sets of North African immigrants — the *pieds noirs* and their children and more recent Muslim arrivals — set up again, in a new place, the hostilities of the 1950s in Algeria. In both France and Algeria, the same shift, from a leftwing allegiance to a far right or fundamentalist allegiance, can be seen, with the likely cause economic insecurity in both cases. The connections are distant but they are there.

North-south disparities are repeated two or even three times in the Mediterranean region. There is the developmental difference between North African societies and European societies on the other side of the sea; then that between the southern and northern regions of European societies, as in Spain, Italy, and what used to be Yugoslavia; and then, though less clearly, that between them and northern European countries proper. This south-north gradient has the usual effect on migration, smuggling (including people-smuggling), other kinds of organised crime, and on political attitudes.

The drowning last year of nearly 300 illegal immigrants off Sicily was a tragedy that briefly focused attention on the criminal trade in people, drugs, and other goods. The statistics of work and economic development in the south suggest that a match between numbers and economic opportunities is almost impossible. Those further north can make for bad reading, too. Unemployment in parts of southern Spain is 40 per cent: it is high along most of the northern shore of the Mediterranean. Crime and corruption follows a similar pattern. In southern Italy, small firms are grouped in guarded complexes to prevent them being blackmailed by the Mafia.

The problems of Mediterranean societies spring in part from their situation on religious front lines. There is that between Christianity and Islam, that between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and a third between Catholicism and Orthodoxy on the one hand and Protestantism on the other.

This last is one aspect of local resistance to the long supremacy of Anglo-Saxon naval power, first British and now American. Even now the Anglo-Saxon factor is important. It certainly underlies the apparently insoluble difficulty of Gibraltar, where Spain still tries to extirpate the evidence of a British victory, nearly 300 years ago, that brought Spain's time as a great power, in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, to an end.

Only a few weeks ago, Britain again rejected a Spanish proposal to share power over Gibraltar. The mark of the British on the intricate political geography of the region can also be seen in Malta and Cyprus, whose modern situation and problems would not be what they are without their "British" history, and more broadly in the whole of the eastern Mediterranean where their role has been inherited by the Americans.

The Anglo-Saxon factor can also be seen at work in the arguments over such matters as the French proposals that the Nato southern command be taken over by a European officer. The Latin states want some affirmation of their importance in what they still envisage as "their" sea, even if the US Navy is still far and away the most potent military force on, above, and below its waves. Yet Europe's efforts to achieve more control, whether by military changes, by diplomacy, or by aid, have not borne much fruit.

If anything, the decisive role of the United States in the Mediterranean region is more pronounced now than it was a few years ago, at a time when Europe proposed to deal with the Yugoslav crisis on its own, saw itself as becoming a major influence in the Arab-Israeli peace process because of its financial contributions, and was preparing its partnership proposals for southern and eastern Mediterranean states.

Again and again, the United States has operated as the final and most effective arbiter, in Bosnia, as usual in Israel and the territories, but also between Turkey, Cyprus, and Greece, including the defusing, in recent weeks, of the crisis over Greek Cypriot orders for Russian missiles. Europe's efforts have not been risible, but nor have they been particularly effective.

The grand tidying up of the problems of the Mediterranean hoped for only a few years ago is not in prospect. Mediterranean societies, in trouble or in anger, have the power to disrupt affairs far to the north, as with Turkey's threats to oppose Nato expansion, and as with the leakage of the Algerian conflict into mainland France.

It seems amazing that the Foreign Legion, whose role once was to fight North Africans in the Atlas mountains, is now deployed on the Paris Metro to deter North African fundamentalist bombers. It seems strange that the Eastern question, in the shape of Turkey's future relationship to Europe, should still be so critical, and perhaps even stranger that Spain should still be seeking to reverse the Treaty of Utrecht. But it is typical of the way in which a complicated and violent history still shapes the Mediterranean present.

The world's media welcomed the Hebron agreement. And so, in a brief day of celebration, did those who live in the West Bank town. But, **Edward W Said** argues, the deal made between Arafat and the Israeli team left the Palestinians without proper self-determination

No real reason to rejoice

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

THE Hebron agreement, signed last month with such fanfare and excitement, was really signed in September 1995, as part of the Oslo Two accord celebrated with patched-together ceremonial on the White House lawn.

When I visited Hebron last July, I paid a call on an old friend, Mayor Mustafa Natshe, to find out what he saw as the future of his town. He told me that he had pleaded with Yassir Arafat and his men during the 1995 negotiations that led up to Oslo Two not to sign an agreement that would give a Palestinian seal of approval to the 450 illegal settlers — most of them fanatics — squatting with such offensive, even murderous, insistence in the centre of an Arab town.

"It isn't just the principle of the thing that is so galling," he said, "but the fact that giving them this foothold in our midst by partitioning the town makes it possible for them to use Hebron as a precedent for staying in all their other settlements, extending their reach further all over the West Bank."

Natshe's pleas went unheard, as Arafat and his team pressed ahead with their Israeli peace "partners" who consolidated their gains with, I suspect, a sense of disbelief. How else could even the most hardened Israeli explain that the Palestinians had accepted a formula for "coexistence" in Hebron which gave 450 people (with the Israeli army guarding them) the choicest 20 per cent of the town's commercial centre, whereas the 160,000 resident Palestinians were expected to be happy that they got 80 per cent, so bogged down with conditions as to make it a peripheral part of the Israeli enclave.

What sort of "strategic" calculation by the Palestinian leadership produced acquiescence in the Israeli settler population being allowed to carry arms, abetted by Israeli patrols given virtually the run of the surrounding hills, while the Palestinian police were limited to a few poorly armed men, theoretically subject to Israeli restraints?

Nevertheless, there seemed to be genuine euphoria among Hebronites, for whom the presence of Israeli settlers and soldiers has been so unpleasant an ordeal; just seeing some of them leave in the hope of not having them come back on quite the same basis as before supplied a good day's worth of celebration.

But much of the jubilation will be as short-lived as it was when Ramallah and Nablus went through the same happy catharsis 18 months ago. Hebron was not liberated: 80 per cent of it was given the right to administer municipal affairs — sanitation, health, postal delivery, education, local security and traffic — under the Palestine Authority's jurisdiction, with Israel still in charge of security, access, water and overall sovereignty.

The ambiguities are evident in reports from Hebron in the press. On the first day, there were reports citing Netanyahu and Sharansky as to how Hebron is still Israeli, backed up by statistics showing continued Israeli control over the city. The next day, editorials and stories predicted a Palestinian state emerging soon from the messy Palestinian "archipelago" that has left the West Bank and Gaza divided into lots of little parts without territorial continuity or sovereignty.

On US television, the *de rigueur* scene of Arafat and Netanyahu shaking hands with American mediator Dennis Ross between them showed a grim-faced Arafat anxious to speed away into the night. As the New York Times coyly put it in its jubilant report of how well things went, the actual amounts of land to be ceded to the Palestinians were left entirely to "Israel's discretion".

Now this is precisely how things were left in the Oslo Two documents, since just before the Washington signing the Israelis calmly removed the specific areas of re-deployment already agreed with the Palestinians and left the timetable. Apparently Arafat demurred at this, but under American pressure was made to sign. His latest heroics during the Hebron negotiations were meant to make up for what had happened earlier, but he failed again. No wonder he didn't want to answer any questions.

It has been no secret that the US, which has sub-contracted out its Middle Eastern policy to Dennis Ross and his coterie of experts, placed Arafat under impossible pressure. Israel's political concerns and its exaggerated obsessions with security and terror were adopted by the US middlemen, who were acting as anything but honest brokers. There was also an important confluence of strategic aims that united Netanyahu and Ross: that there should never be anything resembling real Palestinian self-determination.

And three and a half years after Oslo began, "autonomy" for Palestinians is all that has been achieved, in tiny enclaves on the West Bank whose roads and access are controlled by Israel. An important town like Ramallah now has settlements on three sides. Sovereignty in the true sense of the word remains in Israel's hands, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Why do so many Israelis seem upset by this agreement, which keeps them firmly in charge throughout the still-Occupied Territories? The reason is an ideological fanaticism so deep and all-encompassing that most western and even Arab readers do not have an adequate sense of its imperatives. Despite the millions of Palestinians in Palestine, they have always been considered aliens, to be tolerated at most or to be driven out or treated either as non-existent or as juridical inferiors.

PALESTINE is considered to be the land of the Jewish people entrusted to Israel; no non-Jews are doctrinally allowed to use or have this land. That is why Netanyahu, more honest than Peres, has always refused to accept the formula "land for peace," and why sovereignty accorded to non-Jews has not, and will not be, an admissible concept in the negotiations.

I believe these positions are also shared by the "acceptable" Israelis (including the ubiquitous Amos Oz), whose views are aired in western media as representative of the peace camp, and who brilliantly conceal their real views of Palestinians beneath conscience-rending, anguished prose. They never bring up sovereignty for Palestinians. Many of them (including the egregious Henry Kissinger) speak of a Palestinian state, which they say they would accept, but none of them has specified sovereignty and real self-determination for Palestinians.

Trying to put myself in the shoes of the PLO men who continue to produce such disadvantageous agreements that do nothing to change the course of Israeli policy, I keep asking what our leaders must be thinking. They certainly do not do very much talking, and share very little with their people beyond the usual triumphalist nonsense.

All I come up with is a series of unflattering rationales for going on as before, with equally bad results and equally tragic consequences for the whole people. One is that as long as the peace process guarantees the centrality of the PLO and its leader, then anything goes. Another is that being so out-gunned and outsmarted by Israel, you feel you have no choice but to go on, trying to brazen it out *vis-à-vis* your own people with hopeful but ultimately misleading speeches and promises; meanwhile, you surround yourself with supporters who tell you what you want to hear, and are anxious to help you set up feel-good things like a bagpipe band, a few luxurious cars and houses, and postage stamps with your face on them. The best thing is to go on as many state visits (none of them necessary) as possible, one day Stockholm, another Paris, another Cairo.

A third rationale is to make more concessions, accepting all the humiliating Israeli conditions in the wishful fantasy that some day you'll either stop having to make concessions or the Israelis will give you a few things back. Fourthly, you can say that this is politics, a dirty business, and so we proceed with the Israelis like partners in crime; never mind that they get all the advantages, a lot of commercial deals have come our way.

There may be one or two more possibilities, but none explains the Palestinian streets' acceptance of this appalling situation, which seems to worsen daily. Many of Arafat's advisers are intelligent men and women, quite a few with long histories in progressive politics. Why are they so silent? And why do the most gifted so willingly accept a few material advantages (a car, an office, a VIP designation) in return for continuing to work with a man whose tactics they loathe and whose mistakes over the past few years they know — and say openly — have brought us as Palestinians and as Arabs to one of the lowest points in our history?

Why silence, and why co-operation? Do they feel no obligation towards the truth and to the misery of a people whose continuing dispossession could have been alleviated a thousand times better than the PLO has done?

IN the meantime, most people in the US and in Europe genuinely believe that peace has improved things for the "area", and that for the first time in 30 years the Palestinians are getting their freedom.

This is the cruelty of the Palestinian dilemma. We want to show that we desire peace, yet because of that "peace", the daily lives of all but a tiny handful of wealthy businessmen, security chiefs and PA employees have become a good deal worse.

For at least six months, the mainstream media in the US and Europe have been filled with stories about the diplomatic front, the negotiations, the impasses and the final breakthroughs, and completely void of anything that shows real Palestinian lives on the ground.

There has been no coverage of the thousands of students in Gaza who cannot go back to their schools and universities on the West Bank (forbidden by Israel); nothing about the large number of Palestinian prisoners still festering (and in some cases being tortured to death) in Israeli prisons; nothing about the horrors that a large family in Gaza with unemployed father must go through just to survive; nothing about the systematic, almost daily reprisals against Palestinians who try to prevent their own dispossession by Israeli settlers and army; nothing about what it means for a Palestinian to try to get in and out of Gaza (or about all West Bankers who have been forbidden entry into Jerusalem for a year); nothing about the checkpoints that make the little West Bank enclaves seem like stifling ghettos; nothing about life under Arafat's dreadful regime, with books, newspapers and magazines censored or banned, the security services threatening average people, and corruption killing the possibility of regular daily business.

And nothing, above all, about the total absence of law or the rule of law in the Palestinian autonomy areas.

Given all this, plus the sense of frustration and hopelessness felt by every Palestinian at the cruel farce our leaders are forced to enact, it becomes an absolute duty to describe the actualities of quotidian life under the peace process — unadorned and in the greatest detail possible.

The world must be told by us what our people under occupation are still going through. This is not a matter of money, but of discipline and will. If every one of us first took it upon him- or herself to be informed, and then attempted somehow to break through the official and media silence — with a letter to the editor, a call to a radio or TV station, the setting-up of groups to do this kind of work systematically and collectively — then we will be beginning our attempt at liberation, a laughably modest attempt it is true, but surely a great deal better than passivity and silence.

The present situation cannot last. There are too many inequities and injustices right at the heart of Palestinian life. Who is preparing for the next, post-Hebron phase?

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THIS WEEK'S essayist, Edward W Said, is University Professor of Literature and Chair of the doctoral programme in Comparative Literature at Columbia University, New York. His books include Orientalism, The Question of Palestine and Culture and Imperialism. Last year he published Peace and its Discontents, which deals with the Middle East process; later this year a new updated edition of Covering Islam will appear. He was born in Jerusalem

The PC of the right

Martin Kettle

IN the eyes of many people, this newspaper embodies a way of looking at the world. I say this as a fact, not as a boast or as a complaint. In some ways it is an enviable position to hold; in others not. Say "Guardian" and people have an instant picture about the paper. Say "Guardian readers" and they know exactly what that means too.

Yet the stereotyped view of the Guardian long ago became a lazy cliché. Like all clichés, there was truth to it at one time, though we are talking about the Guardian of at least 20 years ago. But I don't dispute that the Guardian, and the Guardian reader, had that meaning to many people at that time. Nor do I dispute that, from time to time even now, the paper publishes things or says things which provide an echo of those times.

The point I want to make with absolute conviction is that the stereotype of the Guardian and its readers as dogmatic, predictable and self-righteous is a travesty today, and probably was then. This imagined Guardian of the rightwing press is simply unrecognisable in the real world. The Guardian, and even the Guardian reader, of rightwing journalistic cliché are to a very large extent inventions.

Why do I make this argument now? I do so because yet again a rightwing columnist in a rightwing newspaper has wheeled out this stereotype of the Guardian in order to make yet another attack on the supposed "political correctness" of the left. On this occasion, not for the first time, the culprit was the Daily Telegraph's Janet Daley. Daley is a genuine recidivist. She doesn't respond to treatment. She can't see a Guardian reader without wanting to arraign them in front of a war crimes tribunal.

Her most recent offence was the charge that the left and the Guardian are inflexibly in favour of mothers who work rather than look after their children. Have I missed something? But then evidence is not Daley's strong point. She simply believes that the Guardian-writing and Guardian-reading culture is filled to the brim with people who view every issue through a Claude-glass of political correctness. We are, apparently, absolutely certain about everything.

We believe, I infer, that women must behave exactly as men, that the family is a bourgeois tyranny, that abortion is an unalloyed social boon, that euthanasia should be encouraged, that homosexuality must inevitably be celebrated, that white people are always racist and black people incapable of racism, that to be British is to live with perpetual shame, that everything that came out of the Soviet Union was beyond criticism, and that nothing good ever emerged from the United States.

Above all, though, we believe that anyone who demurs from any of these — to us — self-evident truths is to be run out of town. I pastiche — but only a little.

I've got news for Janet Daley. I don't know anyone on the left who thinks like this on any of these issues, let alone all of them. My impression of the left is not that it is rigid with correctness, but that it is riddled with hesitation. Daley seems to imagine that we are all paid-up members of the certainty tendency. In fact, we are as uncertain as it is possible to be. The real criticism is not that we have closed minds, but that we are so incorrigibly open to new ideas.

How anyone on the right can seriously believe that the left is a slave to dogma is one of the greatest mysteries of the age. We're all over the place. We're doing our best, but we are congenitally diffident. Why do you think New Labour is the way it is? Because it knows what it wants? Or because it is the institutional embodiment of the tentativeness of the times? We think we know some of the things we would like to believe in, but we are always aware that we could be wrong.

To choose an issue like working mothers to attack the left just shows how extraordinarily out of touch Daley must be. I can honestly say that I don't know any parent who is happy about the balance between work and home in their own lives, let alone one who feels confident in laying down the law to anyone else. Everyone I ever meet is worried sick about the problem. It is a topic of endlessly unresolved discussion. Every parent of my acquaintance is aware of the different pressures and the difficulty of balancing the various factors.

But what they all have in common is that they know, from their direct experience, that there are no cost-free answers. That doesn't mean they shirk those options — in my experience, these people are not rudderless relativists at all — but they understand what is at stake.

For the rightwing press to dub this sea of uncertainty as political correctness is simply laughable. What kind of world do these rightwing commentators live in? Can't they see that they are the only ones with an untroubled vision of a world neatly subjugated to ideology?

They are the ones who have answers to everything and the zeal to compel all the peoples of the globe to accept them. It isn't the left that is enslaved by political correctness; it's the right.

The Guardian/ Nexus conference on the future of the Centre-left, Passing the Torch, is on March 1. Speakers include Tony Blair. Details 0171 222 8877

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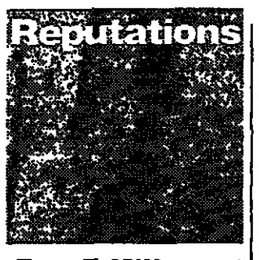


ROGER COWE meets the man charged with rescuing a reputation sullied by a whole series of disasters

HORNS are not visible on Chris Fay's head, despite the evil picture of the oil giant Shell painted by its critics, most recently in clashes with environmentalists in the North Sea and human rights activists in Nigeria.

Fay is chairman and chief executive of Shell UK, which represents a tenth of the group's global operations, with assets worth £3.5 billion and 11,000 employees, ranging from petrol station staff and North Sea oil rig workers to chemical plant employees.

His job includes leading the counter-attack in the UK against the fierce criticisms prompted by Shell's attempt to sink the Brent Spar oil rig in the Atlantic. The need to rescue Shell's reputation has led to an unprecedented opening up of the secretive and introverted company, with Fay appearing at open forums to explain Shell's position and, crucially, to listen to the views of opinion formers.

Changing the Shell culture will need determination and persistence, as Fay knows, but it is also essential for Shell to understand the world and for the world to understand Shell.

"The problem is that Shell is full of introverted technical people, all dealing in their one per cent world. It's a case of joining in the debate across a broad spectrum. People want to understand more and I would much rather they did, then they will have a greater appreciation of the complexities," he said.

It hasn't been easy. Last year Shell UK produced its first environmental report. It was widely praised as being streets ahead of most other major companies, but it should have come out the year before. It didn't because of worries that it gave too much away — to critics.

That is precisely the point. Through its petrol stations Shell has a direct link with consumers. Boycotts and even violent attacks on petrol stations during the Brent Spar affair proved that even a giant like Shell cannot remain curled up, hiding from the world. It must be accountable to consumers, beginning with openness to criticism as well as information.

To that end, Shell UK is now pondering following up its environmental report with a social statement.

"There are a lot of ingredients and a lot of processes, a lot of grey areas," Mr Fay said. "The problem is understanding what people want. We are asking questions, but we find we are getting very shallow answers."

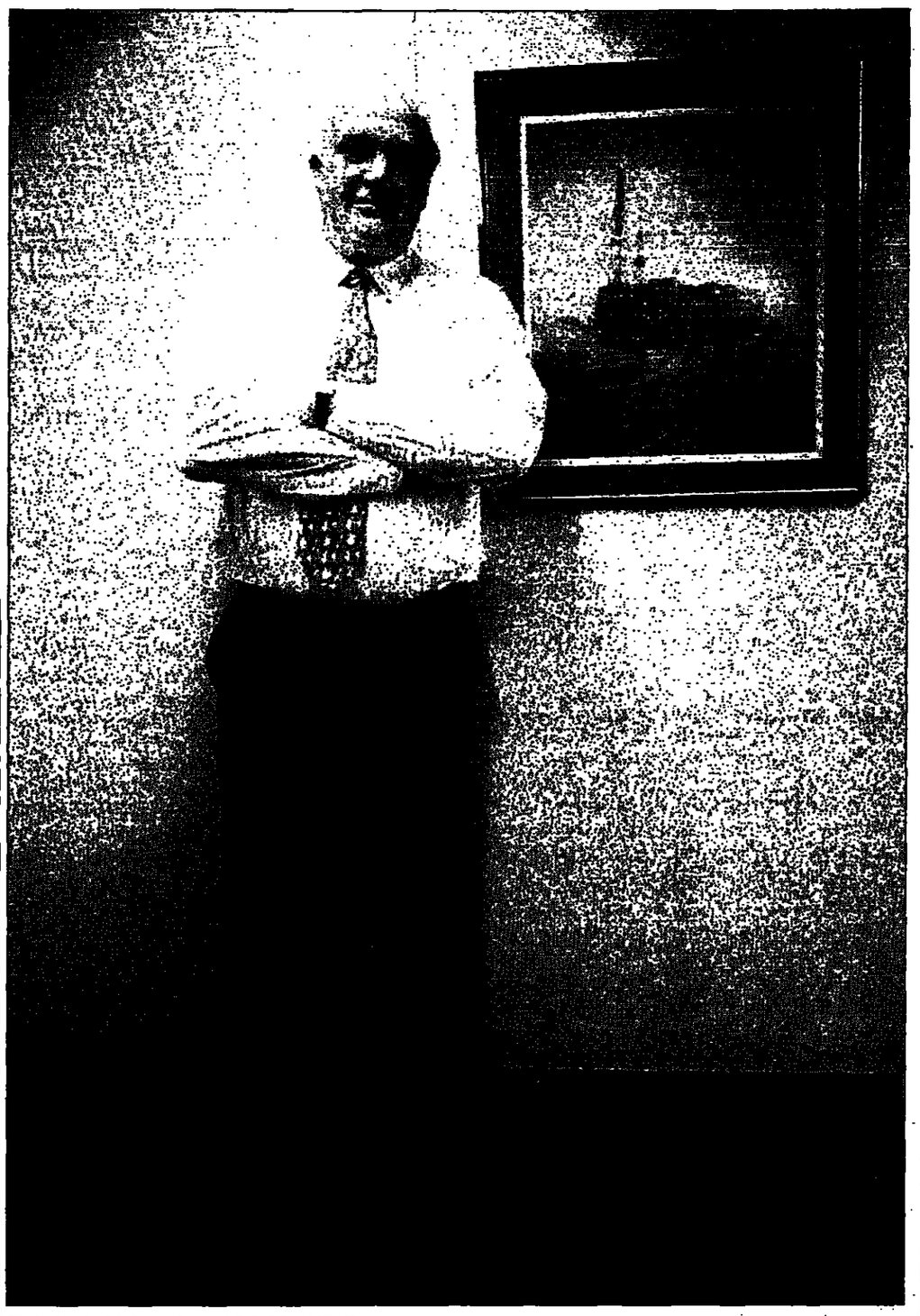
For Shell, just asking the questions would formerly have been unthinkable.

Nigeria is the responsiblity of Shell International, the group head office organisation based in The Hague and at the imperious, ugly blocks on the Thames's south bank. Critics say International is finding it much more difficult to admit its mistakes and rebuild its reputation.

David Wheeler, head of ethical audit at the Body Shop, which has pursued Shell relentlessly over Nigeria, said this week: "Shell UK is nothing like as neanderthal as International. There is a need to admit publicly that they got it wrong with Ken Saro-Wiwa. That is difficult for a very proud organisation."

John Jennings, who will retire as group chairman at the end of June, represents the old face of Shell — the one which angered apartheid campaigners in the seventies and eighties because of its unapologetic support for the South African regime.

He presented the group's financial results for the last time this week. He could not quite hide the disdain with which he regards criticisms of the group's role in Nigeria.



Chris Fay is thinking the unthinkable at Shell PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

"The situation is, I hope, improving," he said, with a weary air. "But there are still those who try to fan the flames of hatred." Mr Jennings said Ogoni was only a small part of the Nigerian oil delta, and was not treated any differently to the rest of the region, but he listed $30 million a year social and medical projects which the group is financing to try and repair community links.

"I hope the various initiatives will lead to the full restoration of our operations there," he said, denying claims that Shell staff have returned under military protection.

Mr Jennings' departure creates vacancies on the board. One will be filled by Phil Watts, in charge of Shell's Nigerian operations from 1991 to 1994, just before the Ogoni troubles exploded. And since last year he has been responsible for planning, environmental and external affairs.

Mr Jennings turned down the opportunity to own up publicly that Shell has historically neglected its links with the outside world, while also rejecting the notion that Watts' appointment represents Shell thumbing its nose at its Nigerian critics. "He's just the best man for the job," Jennings snapped.

Change is afoot, however. The attacks over Shell's Brent Spar plans and its relationship with the Nigerian government, have prompted a dramatic reassessment. The company has decided to come out of its shell, as it were.

Mr Jennings' successor at the top, Cor Herkströter, admitted last October that the group had misjudged public opinion. "We have discovered that we have to place a new emphasis on listening and exchanging views. We have found that we have to communicate more — internally and externally," he told an audience at the Dutch Association for International Affairs.

"We were, perhaps, excessively focused on internal matters ... we tended to become inward looking, isolated, and consequently some have seen us as a 'state within a state'."

Mr Herkströter has already put his new-found beliefs in openness into practice, with an unprecedented briefing for London financial journalists last month.

This new stance has shocked many within Shell, who know the Anglo-Dutch giant as shy to the point of secrecy, with the kind of corporate culture which tends to give multinationals a bad name by producing "company men" (and very occasionally women) with such common attitudes and values that they appear almost as automatons.

Chris Fay seems completely comfortable with openness. It is difficult to stop him talking — about anything from his father's career as a shopkeeper to the difficulty of producing environmental reports.

He is as thoroughly Shell as anyone, having joined straight from university in 1970 and spent the next 18 years singing the company song in Nigeria, Malaysia, Scandinavia and Turkey. But he is the antithesis of the quiet, studied, defensive, anonymous executive who might almost be expected to wear the famous sea shell logo on his forehead — or his underpants.

Despite a lifetime in the industry, Fay's passion is not really oil. He is a rugby man. That is why he was one of only two children in his class to go to university (Leeds) — because he heard that it was a great place to play sport. And that is why he stayed on to do a PhD (in civil engineering). It allowed him to complete four years playing for Yorkshire before "falling into management", as he put it.

Nevertheless, he would not be where he is today without being dedicated to the company. That is evident in his comments about openness: "It means taking bigger risks with younger people. If things go wrong you can always change people."

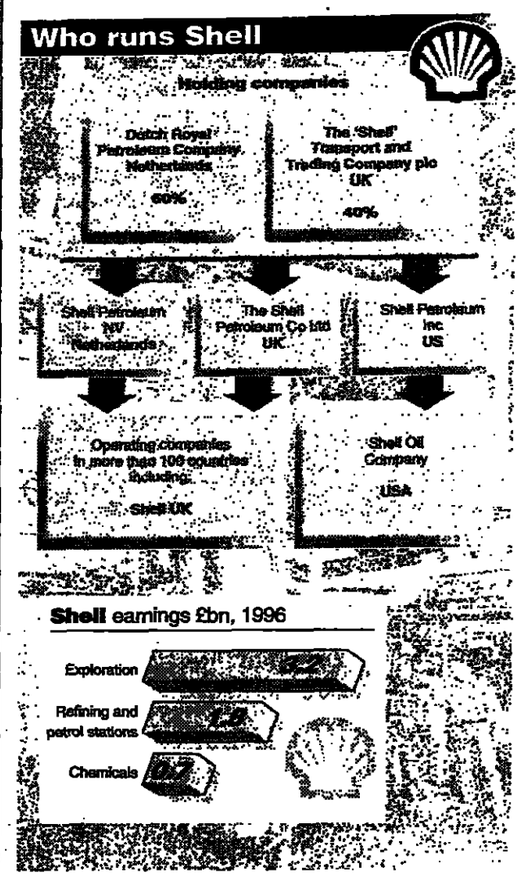
He is struggling to come to terms with Shell's new-found environmentalism. You could almost hear his teeth being gritted as he acknowledged the limits to oil, at the public forum in November: "It does seem increasingly probable that man-made carbon dioxide, largely from fossil fuels, may affect climate — albeit much less than in previous projections based on an unrealistic view of how energy markets could develop next century."

The issues

Brent Spar and dumping
SHELL agreed with the British Government that deep-sea dumping was the best solution to the dilemma of how to dispose of this unusual oil platform storage tank, built in the seventies. In 1995 the group was forced to abandon this plan in the face of fierce consumer opposition, especially in Germany, fuelled by publicity stunts organised as part of a campaign by Greenpeace, the environmental group. The Brent Spar is currently moored in a Norwegian fiord while the best solution is developed through a process of consultation and competitive commercial bidding.

Nigeria and the Ogoni
SHELL'S role in the Nigerian economy was raised in 1995 by Ken Saro-Wiwa, a campaigner for the rights of people in the oil-producing Ogoni region. He demanded a greater share of oil revenues and that Shell compensate for and clean up environmental damage in the region. The group's relationship with the military regime was made more critical by Saro-Wiwa's execution, but Shell was adamant that it should not be expected to interfere in the internal affairs of any country in which it operates.

Sustainability
AS part of its environmental awareness, Shell is committed to the principle of sustainability endorsed by the 1992 Earth Summit. Yet the group has found it difficult to accept that its core business of extracting fossil fuels is inherently unsustainable in the long run and damaging to the atmosphere.



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Debate shifts again as EMU countdown looms

Mark Milner

SLOWLY, over the last few months, the debate about the readiness of European Union member states for monetary union has changed.

Last year the focus of argument was on whether the terms laid down in the Maastricht treaty were sacrosanct or subject to interpretation.

In particular, whether the permitted level of public sector debt of 3 per cent of gross domestic product and government debt of 60 per cent of GDP laid down in the treaty meant precisely 3 per cent and 60 per cent — or simply something approaching those figures.

That argument appeared to end in a score draw between the French and the Germans over a stability pact designed to police post-monetary union fiscal rectitude — the kind of score draw which, to continue the sporting analogy, would require a replay and then sudden-death penalties.

Yet with one or two statistical quirks (to put it no more strongly) that have been or will be decided upon by the mathematicians at Euro-stat, the heat appears to have gone out of the issue of whether to fudge or not to fudge.

A new statement of intent (not a mantra, that would be too strong) has entered the vocabulary of the single currency faithful. It is that monetary union "will take place and on time".

The last three words are the key to the shift in the nature of the debate. EMU enthusiasts now see delay as the main threat to the single currency.

That has one very important immediate effect. Supporters of the view that monetary union will only work if there is a sufficient degree of convergence between the economies of the countries involved appears to be in the ascendent.

It is not just a question of meeting the Maastricht criteria in 1997 — ticking the boxes, as the monetary affairs commissioner, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, put it recently — but of ensuring such stability is sustainable.

As the question of sustainability involves an element of judgment, then there might be cause for concern that that will provide the opportunity for political manoeuvering (who said fudge?).

But the European Monetary Institute, which includes its share of monetarist hardliners, will be among the judges, so it will be hard to keep any such political spin undetected.

The new cry of danger in delay, however, has its own problems. No delay and no fudge would provide the financial markets with a credible hardcore membership, if potentially rather small in number.

Indeed, given the current level of German unemployment, and despite the protestations of finance minister Theo Waigel, it might not even include Germany, which would make the whole thing meaningless.

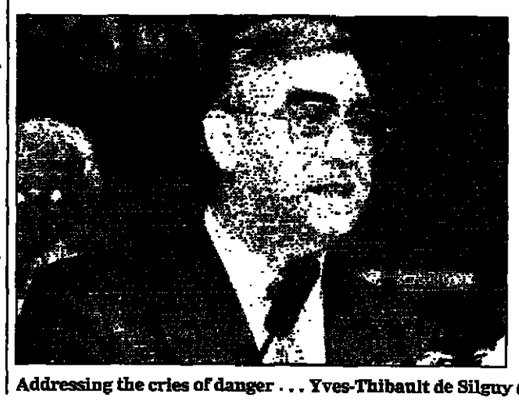
Setting that aside, the broader worry for advocates of sticking to the Maastricht timetable is that, if there were any slippage, not only would a new timetable have to be negotiated, but many of those countries currently courting political unpopularity by curbing spending and/or raising taxes to meet the entry conditions might abandon the struggle in the face of indefinite postponement.

There are those, too, who believe that if Maastricht is abandoned, the EU's credibility in the negotiations over enlargement will also be damaged.

But supporters of delay could argue that those countries which are trying hardest to meet the Maastricht criteria might not be ready in time and, if excluded, would then lose their enthusiasm for budgetary correctness or, if admitted, blow the project's credibility with the financial markets. Nor would their reaction to being relegated to the slow lane of a two-speed Europe necessarily be that of the sporting loser.

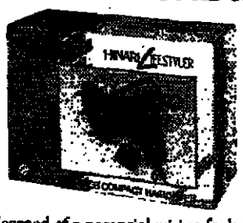
An additional danger of ramming through EMU according to an arbitrary timetable is that it will place intolerable strains on the project itself — so that, whatever the convergence so far achieved, a single interest rate across a spread of countries would prove too blunt an instrument.

Either course has risk, but then a project as ambitious as monetary union cannot be achieved without it. But unless the economic map of Europe changes dramatically within the next 12 months, the balance of risk should dictate delay.



Addressing the cries of danger ... Yves-Thibault de Silguy (left) and Theo Waigel

Product Recall Notice
Hinari Lifestyler Hairdryer (£6.99)
Model Number: LW634D
Reference Code: 376D0520



Woolworths has learned of a potential wiring fault in its exclusively sold Hinari Hairdryer which under certain circumstances causes the hairdryer to short circuit. In the interests of customer satisfaction and as a precautionary measure, the hairdryer has been withdrawn from sale in all Woolworths stores.
Any customer who has purchased this product since September 1996 should return it to their nearest store, where a full refund will be given. A receipt is not necessary.

WOOLWORTHS

Pre-tax figure up 52pc to £2.5bn at merged bank as bad debts fall and consumer confidence returns

Profits soar at Lloyds TSB

Pauline Springett

LLOYDS TSB yesterday kicked off the main bank reporting season with a 52 per cent rise in pre-tax profits of £2.5 billion, fuelled by falling bad debt provision and consumer demand for mortgages and retail banking services.

The bumper profits were in line with City forecasts. Initially the shares fell as analysts said they could see little to make them raise their forecasts for next year. But sentiment later improved as the market digested the 20 per cent rise in the dividend payout at 13.2p.

The year-on-year results were muddied by the bank's vast reorganisation. It was the first time that a full year's combined figures were shown for Lloyds and TSB, which were merged in December 1995. Lloyds had already acquired the Cheltenham & Gloucester in 1995 and last month paid £1.8 billion for the 38 per cent of Lloyds Abbey Life it did not already own.

The Lloyds Abbey Life acquisition resulted in a restructuring provision of £75 million. Sir Brian said "considerable progress" had been made in integrating Lloyds and TSB, with a new management structure now in place. "We remain confident annual cost savings will amount to at least £400 million by 1999, including £50 million from the integration of Lloyds Abbey Life."

The group appears to be one of the few banks not to have fallen foul of the banking union Bifu over this year's pay round, although the union remains concerned over possible job cuts. Lloyds TSB has offered its staff a 5 per cent rise in salaries, apart from 28,000 those in the Lloyds pension scheme, who have been told they will no longer have to pay 5 per cent of their salaries into the scheme — it will be funded by the bank. This in effect gives them the same pay rise.

But the bank lost 4,206 staff last year and chief executive Peter Ellwood made no bones about the fact that more jobs will go. "We do anticipate we will need fewer staff in 1997, but we don't know where the cuts will come," he said.

Bifu said it stuck by its warning that 10,000 jobs would go in total as a result of the merger. It said the bank was being shortsighted in closing high street branches which have traditionally been the focus of customer service, just as new players such as supermarkets are trying to enter the banking market.

But Mr Ellwood said he was well aware of the threat to traditional banking posed by the new entrants. "They have powerful brand names and I see them as a major threat," he said, adding that Lloyds was committed to providing what its customers wanted.

The biggest improvement in the results came in the retail banking division, where pre-tax profit rose by £448 million to £1,721 million. Profits from mortgages increased from £720 million to £1,103 million.

The bank also increased its provisions for the possible payment of compensation for pensions mis-selling by £39 million to £300 million.

Latin America expansion attracts cash-rich lender

LLOYDS TSB is not short of capital and chairman Sir Brian Pitman said yesterday he was looking at expanding in Latin America, where Lloyds has historical ties, *writes Pauline Springett*

"A Latin America with continued low inflation would be attractive. It does look as if they've turned the corner," he said, adding that low inflation in Argentina and Brazil in particular was enabling people to purchase consumer goods and this was fuelling demand for retail banks.

Lloyds is already the second-largest foreign bank in the region. It entered the continent in 1912 when it bought a small stake in the Bank of London and South America. Lloyds took over the bank in 1960, but the operation was hit by the soaring inflation and political unrest of the 1970s and 1980s.

Results due

Estimated pre-tax profits of UK banks due out soon

Abbey National	£1.16bn
Barclays	£2.36bn
HSBC (owns Midland)	£4.58bn
NatWest (exceptional provisions for sales expected)	£1.24bn
Standard Chartered	£875m

Williams locks into UK with £1.4bn bid for Chubb

Roger Cowe

WILLIAMS Holdings yesterday agreed to pay £1.4 billion for the Chubb lock and security company, aiming to create a combination with the group's existing Yale business which would dominate the UK domestic lock market.

The deal comes five years after Williams failed with a hostile bid for Chubb's former owner, Racal.

Williams' chairman, Sir Nigel Rudd, said the company had persuaded the Office of Fair Trading then that a combination was not against the public interest, so he was confident there would be no monopolies problems. But he refused to give market share figures for the two companies, saying that the picture varied across the several sectors of the market.

Williams is offering two shares and more than £7 cash for every three Chubb shares. The offer is a third up on Chubb's share price before news of the deal leaked on Thursday.

Sir Nigel admitted that the high purchase price would depress his group's earnings this year and Williams' share price fell by more than a tenth. But putting together the two companies made strategic sense, Sir Nigel said.

The earlier bid was worth only £750 million. But Sir Nigel and Chubb chief executive David Peacock both said yesterday that the industry and the two companies had changed substantially in the meantime.

Mr Peacock said Williams had focused on fire protection, security and home improvement, which made it a much more attractive owner.

"I have to support the industrial logic, which is absolutely cast iron," said Mr Peacock, who will lose his job after the takeover, as will the rest of the Chubb directors. "These days you have to be big to succeed, and when you put the two groups together there are opportunities you didn't have when they were both separate. It's the right thing to do."

He admitted that his view was "tinged with sadness" because of Chubb's losing its independence. But Williams will honour his two-year contract, worth more than £400,000 a year.

Williams refused to put a number on other job losses, but the main financial benefit of the takeover will come from cost savings, expected to be worth £26 million. Chubb's Sunbury-on-Thames head office will go. Reorganisation will cost £30 million, but will yield profit growth of £14 million a year from extra sales and improved performance.

Sir Nigel said he had approached Chubb and Racal chairman Sir Ernest Harrison late last year and persuaded him that the deal now made sense.

"Chubb is far better than we thought it was in 1991, and Williams is far more focused," he said.

Williams chief executive Roger Carr said Chubb satisfied the group's desire to expand in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region, as well as boosting its UK presence and adding to the security division. The group will benefit from pushing Chubb products through Yale's North American distribution network, and selling Yale products in South Africa and the Far East.

Key characters . . . Williams' chief executive Roger Carr (left) and chairman Sir Nigel Rudd after the deal was announced PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Opel and Mercedes raided in price probe

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE European Commission has carried out dawn raids against Mercedes and Opel as part of an inquiry into car-pricing policies.

The action follows complaints from customers that they are being prevented from shopping around for cheaper deals in other member states. The commission carried out a similar investigation last year into two other German carmakers, Volkswagen and Audi.

Mercedes and Opel are being called to Brussels to explain their reasons for the policy which appears to go against EU anti-trust legislation. The allegations centre on complaints that the car companies will not allow customers from other member states to buy vehicles in EU countries where they can get better deals.

If the companies do not fall into line, the ultimate sanction against them could be for the commission to remove a waiver protecting exclusive car dealerships.

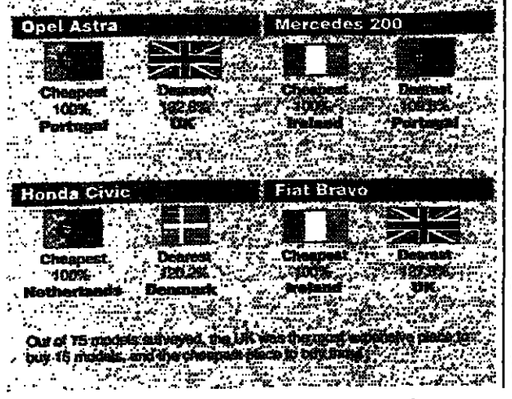
The Netherlands and Portugal have the lowest list prices on the most models, while Germany and France, followed by Britain, were the most expensive.

Price differentials exceeded 20 per cent on 40 of the models examined and were between 30 per cent and 40 per cent on others.

EU figures show that an Opel Corsa is nearly 38 per cent more expensive to buy in Britain than in Portugal, 35 per cent more expensive than in France and 25 per cent more expensive than in Germany.

EU car prices

The range of prices for the same model across European countries, in percentage terms (the cheapest being 100%)



Global telecom pact is set for signing today

Nicholas Bannister
Technology Editor

MOVES to speed up deregulation of the world's telecommunications industry are expected to be agreed today at the world trade talks in Geneva.

More than 60 countries, accounting for 91 per cent of global telecom business, have put forward liberalisation proposals. Ian Taylor, Britain's science and technology minister, said yesterday: "I am confident that what we have on offer is too good to miss."

Sir Leon Brittan, the European Union's Trade Commissioner, said: "We have absolutely no hesitation in saying that it amounts to a massive liberalisation which it would be crazy not to grab with both hands. I think we are ready for a deal."

The World Trade Organisation has said agreement could lead to a $20 billion (£12.3 billion) increase in of UK telecom companies' revenues by 2010.

Mr Taylor, who is heading the UK team at the talks, said he hoped that a final agreement would be announced this evening, but admitted: "We are dealing with a pyramid of cards here."

The last attempt to put such a deal together collapsed at the last minute after US negotiators concluded that the countries with strictly controlled telecom industries had not offered to do enough to open their markets.

The main EU nations have already agreed to open the telecom markets fully to competition by the beginning of next year. Negotiators in Geneva hope that any global deal will come into effect at the same time.

Stitch in time to end child exploitation

Alex Bellos

THE WORLD'S leading sports companies yesterday launched a campaign to stop child labour making footballs in Pakistan after allegations during Euro 96 that children as young as six were making balls sold as official merchandise — the first time multinationals and their suppliers have joined human rights groups to combat child labour.

Pakistan produces 75 per cent of the world's annual sales of hand-stitched footballs, a $1 billion market involving an estimated 7,000 children aged under 14.

More than 50 brands, including Nike, Reebok, Adidas and Umbro, signed an agreement to phase out child labour in 18 months. They will be required to register contractors, stitching locations and stitchers, and must co-operate with an independent monitoring group.

David Husselbee of Save The Children, a lead agency on the project, said it was crucial that the situation was not made worse for children.

It had to be phased in, "so that there is time to develop effective social programmes and alternative sources of income for the families affected".

Spending, which will be overseen by a committee including the ILO and Unicef, is projected to reach $1 million in the next two years, including $500,000 from the ILO, $200,000 from Unicef and $100,000 from the Soccer Industry Council of America. Concern about child labour in Pakistan was raised by trade unions at the start of the Euro 96 championship last year.

Force of Star Wars relaunch dislodges ET as top US grossing film

Mark Tran in New York

THE FORCE is still with Star Wars as the re-released sci-fi epic yesterday became the first film to break the $400 million (£250 million) barrier in the US, dislodging Steven Spielberg's ET as the top grossing film of all time in America.

Although the 1977 classic has been around on video and is shown regularly on TV audiences have flocked to watch Luke Skywalker battle Darth Vader on the big screen. Since its re-release on January 21, George Lucas's film has grossed about $74 million to boost its box office take to $400.1 million.

Mr Spielberg yesterday took adverts in the Hollywood Reporter and Daily Variety in which ET places a crown on R2-D2, one of the film's robotic stars.

Mr Lucas's triumph will be complete if Star Wars overtakes Mr Spielberg's Jurassic Park in the worldwide box office take. Jurassic Park has grossed $913 million. Star Wars comes in at sixth place at $590 million, but has yet to be re-released internationally.

The success of Star Wars, with new scenes, special effects and soundtrack, poses a dilemma for Rupert Murdoch's Twentieth Century Fox studio. Fox had planned to release The Empire Strikes Back on February 21 and The Return of the Jedi on March 7 but did not want all three films shown concurrently.

Big earners

Top grossing films in US ($m)	
1 Star Wars	400.1
2 ET	399.8
3 Jurassic Park	357.1
4 Forrest Gump	329.7
5 The Lion King	312.8
6 Independence Day	306.2

Fox may now be forced to change its mind. Mr Lucas always wanted them shown "so that people could see them like the Saturday matinee serials they were originally meant to be".

Work has already started in London on the first of a new Star Wars trilogy. Hollywood studios were already fighting hard to win distribution rights to the new films and are likely to redouble their efforts after seeing the enduring attraction of Star Wars.

A recent USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll found that the average American has already seen Star Wars seven times.

Saturday Notebook

Black horse takes the inside track

Edited by Alex Brummer

BECAUSE we are creatures of habit, there will be much analytical comment in the coming days about the reporting season for the clearing banks. Lloyds TSB, as the first to report, with a resounding profit of £2.5 billion, up 52 per cent, will be seen as the pacemaker that has to be matched despite higher provisions.

But does this horse-racing approach to the reporting of bank profits make sense any longer? Would it not be as valid, for example, to compare the profits of Lloyds TSB with the Prudential or Abbey National, as against HSBC Holdings or Barclays?

Of all the old-line clearing banks, Lloyds, which was once among the most international (it is currently reaping the rewards of that past), is the only one to have made the transformation from global banking to financial services. In quick succession it has absorbed the Cheltenham & Gloucester, the first of the larger building societies to move into the quoted sector, and TSB, which was mainly a UK retail franchise, as well as absorbing the minority interest in Lloyds Abbey Life.

The bulk of Lloyds TSB profits come from retail financial services (as it is grandly called), which generated an astonishing £1.7 billion of income. While there are other important contributors — some £562 million from wholesale banking and a £127 million injection from problem country (renamed emerging market) debt — the character of Lloyds TSB has been clearly redefined in the marketplace.

When compared with the way in which others have chosen to develop — NatWest, while also focusing on financial services, has expended heavily on investment banking — Lloyds TSB has for the moment chosen a remarkably good place to be. It is arguably more advanced in its strategy than, say, the Prudential, where banking is still in its infancy, the mortgage market not yet conquered and further expansion into insurance through independent financial advisers proving an expensive and complex business into which to break.

Having put itself into a strong position under the leadership of Sir Brian Pitman, where does Lloyds TSB go from here? The easiest approach would be to rest on its laurels and start putting capital back into shareholders' hands through a buyback, in the manner of Martin Taylor at Barclays. But this is not the Lloyds way. Sir Brian and chief executive Peter Ellwood are acutely aware that the financial services market into which they have bought is becoming more competitive and that supermarket entry could rapidly put margins under pressure.

So, encouragingly for expansion, it is preparing to reach back into its history. Both Sir Brian and Mr Ellwood have recently been back to Latin America, one of the most dynamic emerging market areas, and are expected to tidy up its holdings there by taking full control of Banco Multiplic in Brazil. More than the other UK bank, Lloyds TSB has managed to stay ahead in its strategic thinking: Latin America looks a sound medium-term bet.

Aiming high

THE Alternative Investment Market, the junior stock market launched 20 months ago as the successor to the USM, has not covered itself in glory.

There have been a stream of profit warnings and suspensions, a receivership and a wave of gossip suggesting one or more of the "nominated AIM advisers" — corporate finance houses and stockbrokers licensed to float companies on AIM — are about to get their knuckles rapped by the Stock Exchange.

But scratch below the surface and the AIM story begins to read a little sweeter. About £1 billion has been raised by 256 companies with a combined market value of £5.8 billion to develop everything from a remedy for back pain to a new telephone network for Ireland.

In the area of regulation, there is evidence that the AIM police are showing other City bodies a thing or two about how modern financial regulation might work. For a decade the City has laboured under an inflexible statute (the Financial Services Act), which has buried everyone in paper and left most well-organised financial crooks free to carry on regardless.

But, according to those on the front line of the junior market, the AIM regulators seem to be taking a fresh approach. Rather than relying solely on the rule book and the criminal law, the AIM police have been using the old City network to mete out punishment. Quiet words are being had in the right ears, for example, so that Broker X knows that, if his firm dares to submit another flotation document to AIM, the regulators will flatten his business for good.

Some of the AIM companies report visits from the regulators, who seemed to be checking basic things, like whether a business actually existed and had the management to run it.

AIM has undoubtedly attracted its fair share of financial rogues. But the regulator is now picking these off in consummate style.

Locked out

THE putative £1.3 billion bid for Chubb by Williams Holdings, owner of the Yale brand, ought to be good for British lockmaking in the global marketplace: it certainly would be preferable to an American interloper such as Ingersoll-Rand. Chubb is a strong brand in the Asia-Pacific and South African markets, and Yale has more than a foothold in North America, so there ought to be useful combined export opportunities.

The domestic market is, however, far more troubling. Anyone who has recently had cause to buy a lock in the UK will know that the local ironmonger will have on offer Chubb, Yale and a cheap Chinese alternative. Take out one of the larger players and all that will be left is a near monopoly for Williams Holdings.

Just how dominant that domestic monopoly is we do not know because the companies refuse fully to disclose market shares. This seems a prime case for a Monopolies Commission referral.

News in brief

Allcock jury sent home

The Old Bailey jury trying taxman Michael Allcock on corruption charges was sent home for the weekend yesterday without reaching a verdict in the four-month-old case.

The prosecution alleges Allcock took bribes — including holidays abroad and the services of a prostitute — from businessmen in return for tax favours. He denies 11 charges of corruption.

Dresdner rating review

Dresdner Bank, the German owner of Kleinwort Benson, may lose it top AAA credit rating from Moody's Investors Service as a result of increased competition in the sector. The credit rating agency, which recently downgraded Deutsche Bank, said it had also placed Kleinwort Benson's rating under review.

Pilot rejects bid

Pilot Investment Trust, launched in 1993 by Rutherford Asset Management to invest in small companies, yesterday rejected a £46.7 million hostile takeover bid from Undervalued Assets Trust.

Bonus deals for directors tightened up

PRESSURE from financial institutions has toughened directors' bonus schemes over the past year, but a new report says companies continue to award share options with no performance criteria and to pay bonuses for below-average performance, *writes Roger Cowe.*

The analysis by New Bridge Street Consultants of long-term incentive schemes for the UK's top 500 companies reveals that companies have been imposing stricter conditions since the Greenbury Committee reported in 1995.

Conventional share options have been abandoned by 19 of the top 100 public companies, while a further 16 companies will not award them to directors who can benefit from other incentives.

Options are increasingly awarded only if performance targets are met. But the research shows that most companies originally chose a target of earnings growth only 2 per cent higher than inflation. Almost 30 per cent of companies fixing a target last year, however, set a higher level.

Multi-billion bonanza for Lloyds TSB, page 11

Selling the new improved Shell, page 10

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

FinanceGuardian

The $3bn copper caper

Will trial lawyers solve great metal mystery? PAUL MURPHY and LINA SAIGOL report

IN ALL probability, Yasuo Hamanaka is Kangoku Yuki. That is Japanese for "going down". The betting is that the rogue trader who has cost the Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo almost $3 billion by attempting to corner the world copper market over 10 years, faces between three and five years behind bars.

Whether Hamanaka, whose trial for fraud and forgery begins on Monday, is planning to take anyone else down with him is unclear. Sumitomo has always insisted that its former star metals trader pulled off the biggest scam in the history of financial markets single-handedly and without the knowledge of his superiors. This statement has been met with incredulity in Tokyo, as well as in London and New York, where Hamanaka carried out the bulk of his allegedly unauthorised trades.

A year has passed since this newspaper began a series of articles about an obscure metals brokerage, Winchester Commodities, based in the provincial city of the same name. Winchester's principals, Charles Vincent and Ashley Levett, were making dramatic profits by trading in copper. They had paid themselves £25 million apiece over two years, and their activities were being investigated by the Securities and Futures Authority, the City regulator charged with keeping financial traders in check.

It soon became apparent that this was no localised, technical City inquiry. The Securities and Investments Board — London's premier financial regulator — seemed to be looking in detail at the London Metal Exchange and at almost everyone who had any dealings there. American regulators, in the form of the Commodities and Futures Trading Commission, were involved as well. This was a serious matter.

No one wanted to discuss what, exactly, was going on — not publicly, at least. The LME was going to maintain its privacy. This was a market used by professionals whose business was not of any public interest. Newspaper articles citing rumours of financial jiggery-pokery were "malicious" and "irresponsible", according to the chief executive, David King. "There had been no manipulation of the copper market," declared the chairman, Raj [now Lord] Bagri.

Sumitomo Corporation, meanwhile, was maintaining radio silence. It had no comment about why, according to the Guardian's researches, Hamanaka had struck huge trades with Winchester and the metals trading arm of Credit Lyonnais, the French bank, which seemed to defy commercial logic. In particular, it did not want to talk about a transaction codenamed "Radr" — a deal struck in 1993 which involved up to 20 per cent of the world's annual production of copper, and which appeared to be structured so that Winchester would bank a $40 million profit at a stroke.

Only in June last year did Sumitomo "discover" Hamanaka's dealings. Losses were put at $1.6 billion (£1 billion), then $2.6 billion. He was said to have carried out unauthorised trades over a 10-year period.

The price of copper crashed. In London, the LME protested that Hamanaka's suspect business was carried out "off market" by traders who did not fall under the its jurisdiction. The SIB decided it would be best, however, to carry out a full, six-month review of the market.

In the meantime, colourful stories began to emerge.

A month before Sumitomo had gone public with its shame, British regulators had orchestrated a police raid in the offshore haven of Guernsey. Interest centred on an office block in St Peter's Port that housed dozens of "brass plate" companies, and the activities of an accountant named Ian Tickler.

The case was handed to the Serious Fraud Office while, on the other side of the Atlantic, both financial regulators and the FBI were investigating US broking firms with links to Hamanaka, such as Global Metals. The authorities suspected a conspiracy, spanning three continents, to manipulate the world's metals markets.

A history of bungling incompetence began to emerge. The Guardian disclosed that Sumitomo, the LME and the City's regulators had been warned five years previously that Hamanaka appeared to be cooking the books. The London authorities took Sumitomo's word that everything was as it should be.

Winchester Commodities, meanwhile, had been under investigation by the SFA for three years — Dan Simon, one of the watchdog's junior investigators, stumbled across the Radr transaction while taking a general look at the firm's affairs.

His investigation spread to the "Codelco scandal" of 1994, in which the Chilean state copper agency lost $200 million through the actions of its "rogue trader", Juan Pablo Davila. Again, Winchester was involved. Digging deeper, Mr Daniels is said to have come across links between Winchester and several offshore companies, many of which were in Guernsey and fell under the control of Ian Tickler.

The investigation culminated in the Guernsey raids of May last year, but by that time Mr Vincent — now known as Copperfingers — and Mr Levett had taken the "lifestyle" decision to move to Monaco.

They have continued to protest their innocence, and have their lawyers ready to enforce their right to fair treatment.

Winchester is quick to point out that the SFA spent two years reviewing the Radr transaction, which aroused its suspicions in the first place, but finally said it would be taking no action. The same goes for the business it transacted with Codelco. Messrs Vincent and Levett made their money risking all, "putting our bollocks on the line to trade", in Mr Vincent's words.

But so many questions remain. How did Hamanaka get away with it for so long, and why was he trying to keep the price of copper artificially high in the first place? Was he lining his own pockets or did believe he was working in Sumitomo's best interests by hiding his business through a network of fringe brokers in the West?

Japanese commentators doubt that many of these questions will be answered fully in court in Tokyo over the coming weeks. While Hamanaka's lawyers have already indicated that their client will plead guilty to the charges on file (one of fraud, one of forgery), under the Japanese system the court will hear the evidence before Hamanaka is free to plead, and bargain about his punishment.

The Tokyo prosecutor's hit rate is 95 per cent-plus, but it has some other high-profile cases active, such as an oil company scandal involving suspect political donations, not to mention direct corruption charges against certain politicians. The view is that the copper case will not be widened to explain who exactly Hamanaka dealt with in western financial markets, and why.

In Britain, the SIB has finished its review of the LME and recommended a few tweaks to trading and regulatory procedures. Lord Bagri and Mr King have kept their jobs.

Meanwhile, the SFO investigation grinds on, and attempts by those being investigated to bring the whole thing to a halt are being stepped up. Earlier this month, George Staples, the head of the SFO, was facing a contempt ruling over how a search warrant at an obscure accountancy firm was executed.

The BBC's Panorama is promising to provide on Monday a few more clues as to what has been going on. Whatever the revelations, one thing is certain: for years to come we will be able to enjoy the sight of the legal profession running around, digging holes and then volunteering to fill them in again, at a mind-boggling rate of remuneration per hour.

Hamanaka has a lot to answer for. He has set a copper-and-robbers riddle which might never be solved.

Making a pile ... One of the few photographs of Yasuo Hamanaka, the rogue trader due to appear in a Tokyo court on Monday, came from Australia via AP news agency

Upper crust setting for latest act in saga

NO ONE strolling though London's fashionable borough of Kensington & Chelsea would have reason to suspect 152 Holland Park Avenue.

But this is no ordinary terraced house. Behind its maximum security gate lies the deluxe office of Bede & Co, fund manager to the upper crust and until recently run by the former Conservative government whip, Lord Astor, and his brother-in-law Alexander Jones.

Echoing displays of City of London swank to the east, Bede has spent thousands dressing up its offices with an opulence designed to seduce only the vanguard of the aristocracy. Golden slabs of marble sweep the floors and selective abstract paintings line the walls.

This is the scene for the latest twist in the copper caper. Charlie Vincent, it seems, was one of a group of high-rolling investors who trusted their money on an informal basis to Alexander Jones.

The investments went terribly wrong, and those who have lost money are furious.

Bede is not a regular fund manager. Instead, it picks the funda of other firms which suit clients' needs. The company denies it ever handled money for Mr Vincent. The trader's associates, however, say he has lost about £10 million through his dealings with Mr Jones, who has now gone to ground.

While the Securities & Investments Board and the Serious Fraud Office investigate, lawyers for all parties are playing dumb and denying everything.

Roger Taylor, who took on the role of chief exececutive at Bede after the departure of Mr Jones and Lord Astor, denies knowledge of anything untoward.

"Imro [hich regulates fund managers] has investigated us and they found no reason to take their findings further," he says, confidently.

Regulatory insiders, meanwhile, will only suggest cryptically, that they are "policing at the periphery".

One of the strangest aspects of the case, they say, is that no one who has lost any money has filed an official complaint.

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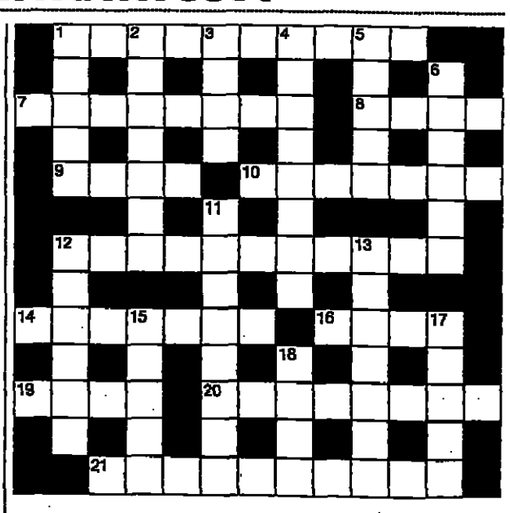

Across

1 One licensed to run public sale (10)
7 Non-monarchial state (8)
8 Approach (4)
9 Carry — racecourse system (4)
10 Rich cheese (7)
12 Factual broadcast (11)
14 Liberty (7)
16 Slight (4)
19 Tax — a northerner (4)
20 Deceiver (8)
21 Out of work (10)

Down

1 Vigilant (5)
2 Sarcastic (7)
3 Inactive (4)
4 Tobacco alkaloid (8)
5 Outdo (5)
6 Incorporate (6)
11 Large retail shop (8)
12 Immediate — alm (6)
13 General pardon (7)
15 Consumed (5)
17 Family — worry (5)
18 Gemstone (4)

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The Guardian
the week

Old rockers and ramblers have turned boring BBC Radio 2 into Middle England's favourite station. **Kamal Ahmed** is all ears

Two of a kind

TONY Blair's eye was famously caught by a *Midlands bloke polishing* his Ford Sierra outside his suburban semi, when he was out canvassing last summer. He was the archetypal Middle Englander, minding his own business, getting on with his life. And if the sound of crooning on the car's radio reached Mr Blair as he passed by, he could be pretty sure it was Middle England's favourite station — BBC Radio 2.

For John Major, middle England is summed up in the persona of Worcester Woman. The Prime Minister has decreed that Tories must turn their sights away from wooing Essex Man and concentrate on the sensible matriarch who drives a Rover, worries about crime and supports her husband and 2.4 children. And on her car radio? Bet your bottom dollar it's Radio 2.

Radio Too Naf, Radio Grim Reaper, Radio Too Old. Britain's most unapologetic radio station has had to battle against a lot of unflattering sobriquets. But quietly unflustered it has just won the war of the airwaves. It is now Britain's most listened-to station, the final victory for middle England. *Britain is now officially middle* of the road.

Impossible, surely? Radio 2 is the station that people don't admit tuning into in the same way that people don't admit voting Conservative. How many people do you know who listen to Radio 2?

Admit it or not, they are there. In its report released to little fanfare last week the radio research centre RAJAR revealed that Radio 2 gained a 12.8 per cent audience share in the last quarter of 1996, compared to 12.4 per cent for Radio 1. In 1992 Radio 1 had a 10 per cent lead.

Radio 2's audience is up by more than 1 per cent, impressive for a national station battling against a host of commercial imposters. Nearly nine million people tune in each week.

Mike Flowers Pops, ballroom dancing, Top of the Pops 2, Sierra man, Worcester woman and Radio 2. Britain is a nation keen to find the easy-chair of life. Items that soothe, not jar. No more battles, just nice cars, nice houses, nice lives and nice music.

As Radio 1 struggles ▶page 14

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EC1GD7

the week that was

Us on us

The British view

"David Howells was a man with the basest of motives. With his wife out of the way, he stood to inherit money. Money, he would later say, that would pay for a jet-skiing holiday with the boys. Thus did greed and cowardice jointly conspire to have Eve Howells murdered at her sons' hands."
Yorkshire Post

"The killing of Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick is a sure sign that the IRA — and Sinn Fein — is still in the hands of those who have yet to learn that violence and politics do not mix. Their politicians may use all their considerable guile, but the underlying message is clear: give us what we want or suffer the consequences."
Belfast Telegraph

"Bellringer Mavis comes a cropper. Pensioner Mavis, 62 became entangled in her bell-pull rope during practice in the Belfry of St Helens Parish Church, leaving her feet dangling seven feet in the air in a church bell tower. Ambulance staff on the scene secured the plucky pensioner, who then had to be lowered to safety from the church roof on a hydraulic lift because the spiral staircase was too narrow for a stretcher."
St Helens Star

Them on them

The global view

"As a British au pair faces charges that she killed a Newton baby in her care, the New England Spy Centre in Woburn reports doubling its sales of Nanny-watch systems which are video cassette recorders, desk top clocks or teddy bears with hidden cameras. The items cost from $495 for the clock to $1,495 for the VCR."
Boston Globe

"The daring attempt of the North Korean official to seek political asylum here heralds the beginning of the end of the edifice entrenched within the northern part of the Korean Peninsula. The North Korean regime's erosion under Kim Jong-il, heir apparent of the late Kim Il-sung, has been evidenced by the steadily rising trickle of refugees and defectors from the impoverished rogue state."
Korea Herald

"Citizens in Vlora and Fier maintained their pressure on the government, staging protests, using slogans like "down with the government" and "resign, resign". The protesters were frustrated with the conclusions of the meeting of the ruling Democratic party leadership that did not give in to demands for the resignation of the government."
Independent Albanian Economic Tribune

THEME OF THE WEEK: TALKING ABOUT THE WAR

"For you, Tommy," as every Nazi soldier says in comic strips, "ze war ist over".

But for most of us Tommies, it still isn't. The second world war may have ended officially nearly 52 years ago, the Germans may be our EU colleagues, but our anti-German sentiment is in splendid health, as this week amply demonstrated.

Harry Enfield's moralised, guilt-ridden German student had his last exclusion on TV, this time at a bureau de change, where he was apologising, not as he usually does for "my country's conduct during ze war", but for "my country's strong currency". [illegible]

The apparently friendly German who under a thin veneer [illegible] is one of our most reassuring national figures of fun. He makes us feel that the good bits of the war — the pulling together, the warmth, the family gathered round the wireless — are continuing reality. So we seize on every snippet of evidence that, yes, it might still be true.

We would love to have blamed the Germans for the recent hoo-ha over the venue for the 2006 World Cup, but the culprit for apparently promising it to Germany and ignoring our case was judged, frustratingly, to be the Swedish chairman of Uefa. Simon Heffer's recent anti-German blast in the Daily Mail nevertheless struck a cheery chord, and the arguing continued in the paper.

Not surprisingly, news of a German actor allegedly misbehaving in Hollywood was enjoyed here. Harald Juhnke is said to have hurled Nazi abuse at a black security man in Los Angeles. Juhnke denied it, but not before several German television stations said they would stop employing him at least until he had apologised for his conduct.

Much glee in Britain also at the news that the first German-produced CD-Rom on the holocaust has apparently sanitised the more unpleasant aspects of Nazi extermination. [illegible] Germany this week. [illegible]

In Germany [illegible] appeal, there was always the GDR to feel bad about. Here, it reminded us that, perhaps, the Nazi period was not just a momentary aberration, but some kind of serious national flaw in the Germans.

The research into neighbourhood snooping in the old East Germany was extremely unsettling. Teachers were involved as well as their pupils, and Stasi officers regularly visited schools for recruits. Recruiters were trained by psychologists into such details as how to dress, how to talk to young people and where to meet them.

The result for the former teenage spies has been disastrous, too, with many now apparently paranoid, even schizophrenic. Sad stuff, but terrific for maintaining our comforting distrust of brother Kraut for as long as possible.

Jonathan Margolis

Harry Enfield's [illegible] Jürgen, the German [illegible]

The blast that shattered the Docklands

This week last year February 9, 1996

Blast damage: some have never recovered from the shock

SHARON SMITH knows that everyone has a personal story to tell of that moment; "I know we should be happy we're alive but people can't see or understand that although the physical scars have gone, the mental damage has stayed."

Sharon is one of many people who still live at South Quay on London's Isle of Dogs and where, this time last year, the IRA dramatically ended the 17-month ceasefire with a bomb that injured more than 100, killed two and devastated the area.

Sharon lives with her four children on the Barkantine Housing Estate, the nearest estate to the explosion. Every window of her flat directly overlooks the bomb site and the sound of drilling screeches six days a week.

When the bomb went off, she was alone in her flat with her three-year-old daughter. Her other children were with friends; husband Brian, was in Bethnal Green on his way home from work.

Brian has since moved out as he cannot cope with living near the bomb site. Sharon says he has been the worst affected psychologically. "He can't talk about it, or look at it. I think the shock of returning to the Isle of Dogs not knowing there had been a bomb, scrambling through the devastation thinking he'd find our block of flats flattened has completely changed him."

She explains that he often sits in the dark crying: "He was never the type to cry; he's worked hard all his life and loves his family; now we're living apart."

Out of the 800 homes, 500 were damaged. Lantern House was the most severely affected and is having to be demolished for safety reasons. Gloria Brotchie has lived there with her disabled husband for 23 years. For her, it's not the psychological damage that has been the problem but the destruction of the community.

She and the 60 other tenants in the block are being evicted at the end of the year and rehoused elsewhere; "This has been our home for nearly a quarter of a century, all my friends and memories are here. We've put time, effort and money into my flat and garden, and we're going to lose the lot."

It is unlikely she will have a garden in her new home and she is being awarded only £271 in damages. They do not even know where they'll be living this time next year; "None of us knows where we'll end up. There are old people who've lived here longer than me and they're being torn from their community and sent to live alone amongst strangers. It's tragic, most of them are terrified."

Many people have been resentful at the reluctance of the Government to give financial support for rebuilding the area, and that aid was given to the business community in preference to the local residents. The Government announced only recently that they will give some financial assistance to Tower Hamlets towards the cost of clearing up, estimated at £8 million.

Unlike Gloria, Sharon is desperate to move out and the local council have not, as yet, answered her pleas; "I can't live with my husband until they rehouse us and my eldest daughter is too scared to go out on her own."

Zoe was in a phone box at the bottom of the building when the bomb went off and glass showered all around her. Her performance at school has fallen dramatically in the last year and she has developed a nervous twitch in her eye.

For Sharon, the worst part of it is the loss of security; "I've always taken my safety for granted, you feel protected. Now, I don't trust anyone. No one seems to care, they've just left us here to cope with it."

Emily Sheffield

HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION?

1. "Marrying is the single most significant event of my life." Who was the romantic?
(a) Liam Gallagher
(b) Noel Gallagher
(c) John Major
(d) Tony Blair

2. What didn't happen at 30 Pavilion Road?

3. "Wow, wow, wow." Which masked man was euphoric?

4. "We should be voting Labour this time around." Harrowing words for the Tories from which paper of the old school?

5. "Old and sad in every way." What was written off?

6. To be or not to be? Who said he was suffering an identity crisis?

7. Who suffered a tearful defeat (above)?

8. Whose book sold for £170,000?
(a) Salman Rushdie
(b) Martin Amis
(c) Thomas Pynchon
(d) Norma Major

9. Who won a record 13th nomination as worst actor of the year in the Golden Raspberry Awards?
(a) Sylvester Stallone
(b) Val Kilmer
(c) Ralph Fiennes
(d) Marlon Brando

10. There were 31,000 in Britain in 1991; there are now 81,000. Which club has boomed?

11. El Loco came off the rails. Where?

12. Who won't be taking the yellow brick road to Hong Kong?

13. "I am against those forms of happy-clappy, huggy-feely worship which seem to reduce God to a puppet." Whose sermon?

14. Who couldn't believe it when he was banned from driving for doing more than 101mph in his Mercedes?
(a) Mark Phillips
(b) James Hewitt
(c) Richard Wilson
(d) Damon Hill

15. Which retailer cleaned up its act?

Answers, bottom left of this page

Two of a kind

◀ page 13 with the tantrums and final departure of Chris Evans, Radio 2 just schmoozes successfully along. Its presenters are kind, with gentle wit and soft voices. It has always been known as old-fashioned but with Steve Wright, the King Lad Jeremy Clarkson and Brian Hayes, who have their own shows, tradition has been allied to the slightest spark of modernity. And the people are lapping it up.

I was not going to tap my feet. Nobody listens to Radio 2 and I was one of them. Not through the Dixie Cups and Chapel of Love (made famous as the final tune in Four Weddings and a Funeral); not through Tracks of My Tears by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles; not through the Moody Blues, Elton John, the Beach Boys and certainly not through Bing Crosby.

But then there was the Rolling Stones with Get Off of My Cloud, Otis Redding and Sitting on the Dock of the Bay, Marvin Gaye, Anita Baker and Prince. The Most Beautiful Girl in the World did it. She got my toes waggling.

This is a new Radio 2. But it is new without throwing out the old. Terry Wogan, Arran jumpers and side-parting intact, is still going strong with his breakfast slot, his second stint at the station after seven years on television. Ken Bruce, whose other present claim to fame is television appearances on that other comfy-jumper number, Countdown, still hosts Pick of the Hits.

Ed Stewart, yes Ed "Stewpot" Stewart of Crackerjack notoriety, still laughs at jokes that labour under the monicker. The jingle, Radio 2 It's All for You, still has that cringing, rising close harmony beloved of Radio 1 jingles of the 1970s. You remember "National Radio Wuuuuun".

But among all the oldies there is still the beat of progress. "Radio 2 has become much livelier and faster," Wogan said. "I wouldn't play Glen Miller any more, but I would play the Eagles or the Carpenters or the Beatles.

"Okay, so it's not exactly modern, look I'm 58, but it appeals to the over-35s, the boomer generation. We lose 150,000 listeners a year to the grim reaper, we have to appeal to the younger end of the market."

It is a question of mix. Wogan still has the radio card tricks, the mime acts and the photo competitions. Funny, of course, because you cannot *see* what's on the radio. Ha. Ha.

He still gives out "Tog" t-shirts for his tough old girl and tough old geezer listeners. But what used to be naff is now naff *and* ironic, a little bit tongue-in-cheek. Even that jingle. It makes all the difference.

"To be frank on Radio 1 the personalities are not strong enough," Wogan said. "If you look at the people who are on Radio 2, Ken Bruce, Debbie Thrower, myself, people know us. They can identify with us.

"If a station relies too much on the music, that is when it goes wrong. People can listen to music anywhere, on their CDs, on other radio stations."

He pauses for a moment. "All we need to do *now* is stick a stake through Jimmy Young's heart and things would be perfect."

You have to be a regular listener to Radio 2 to understand the Young reference. It is another one of those naff but kinda funny running Radio 2 jokes. Young, the man who joined the station in 1973 from Radio 1 and became Margaret Thatcher's favourite interviewer, is the butt of other DJs' humour. In a nice way of course, like jokes about an old and fussy granddad.

Jim Moir, who took over the helm of Radio 2 last year from Frances Line, talks eagerly of "gateways" to encourage new listeners. Saturday is his big gateway day *and he talks* cryptically about "big new announcements" next month to keep all those new younger people tuned in after Wright's three hour effort ends at 1pm.

The Saturday running order is classic new Radio 2. Brian Matthew's Sounds of the 60s hands on to Wright and a show that is surprisingly similar to his old Radio 1 afternoon slot. He may have dropped Mr Mad and the farting newsagent, but Wright still presides over a close copy of the "zoo radio" mixture of songs and chat he invented for his former employers.

It *is* nothing too taxing. One debate last week on the value of the new digital channels ran like this:

Wright: "So, how much would you pay for a package?"

Georgey Spanswick (one of his assistants): "A couple of hundred."

Richard Easter (the other one): "About 150."

Wright: "And you?"

Spanswick (again): "About a couple of hundred."

Wright: "Mmmm. Okay."

It was then time for the next tune. Perfect Radio 2.

After Wright, it's back to traditional Radio 2 with Bob Monkhouse, before another bit of 30-something bait with To the Manor Born, the radio version of the 1980s television series. It still stars Penelope Keith and Angela Thorne and is perfect middle England territory. To the Manor Born is the kind of life-style Worcester woman aspires to.

Moir knows he has to tread carefully. Frances Line, who was credited in the early 1990s with dragging the station kicking and screaming into the 1970s, said that if Radio 1 appealed to listeners under 35 then Radio 2 appealed to those "between the ages of 35 and death".

Go too far and Radio 2 would lose its loyal blue-rinse brigade who still queue outside the Golders Green Hippodrome in London to add their applause to Friday Night is Music Night.

We lose 150,000 listeners every year to the grim reaper

"Of course not all the audience likes the changes," he said. "But the balance of those tuning out is outweighed by those tuning in." And you should never get carried away. Alan Keith still presents Your Hundred Best Tunes on a Sunday evening. And he is 88.

"Changing Radio 2 should be compared to the mating of porcupines," Moir said. "You proceed slowly and very cautiously."

That slow process is going to be hurried up a bit next month. Apart from the changes to Saturday afternoon two of the stalwarts of the Radio 2 schedules, Derek Jameson and his wife Ellen, are to quit their late-evening phone-in programme which has been running for four years.

"IT IS TIME to put a sock in it," Derek said at the time of the announcement last month, before taking a sideswipe at the decentralising vigour of John Birt which has been forced on the corporation. "We live in Brighton and going up and down from home to Glasgow (where the show is produced) was all a bit much. All I need now is a good rest." Moir has said the show will retain the same format of talk-and-tunes, but expect a younger presenter.

Confidence is the key. Confidence to change and to leave well-alone the things people like. During weekdays, when the station's more conservative audience is tuned in, the pace is much slower and change less perceptible.

"We'll have to get the air-freshener," quipped Debbie Thrower at the end of her show last week, referring to the feet of Ed Stewart who was coming into the studio after her. She had just sugared along for 30 minutes with Peter Noone, lead singer of Herman's Hermits who is about to set off on a 72 date tour starting in Llandudno.

"It used to be very rock and roll," Noone said of the old days, when he was famous and everybody listened to Radio 1. "But now these people come with their families, we're the old-stagers now." He was talking about his concert audience. He could have been talking about Radio 2's audience, who have grown up and grown into the station.

Betty, a loyal listener, has written in saying how much she enjoys the show and that she was born in 1923. She also sends in pictures of her mobile home. Thrower knows how to react. "Lovely."

Stuck in the middle with them: Radio 2 DJs (clockwise from left) Terry Wogan, Angela Rippon, Arthur Smith, Debbie Thrower, Steve Wright, Jimmy Young, Bob Monkhouse

Quiz answers

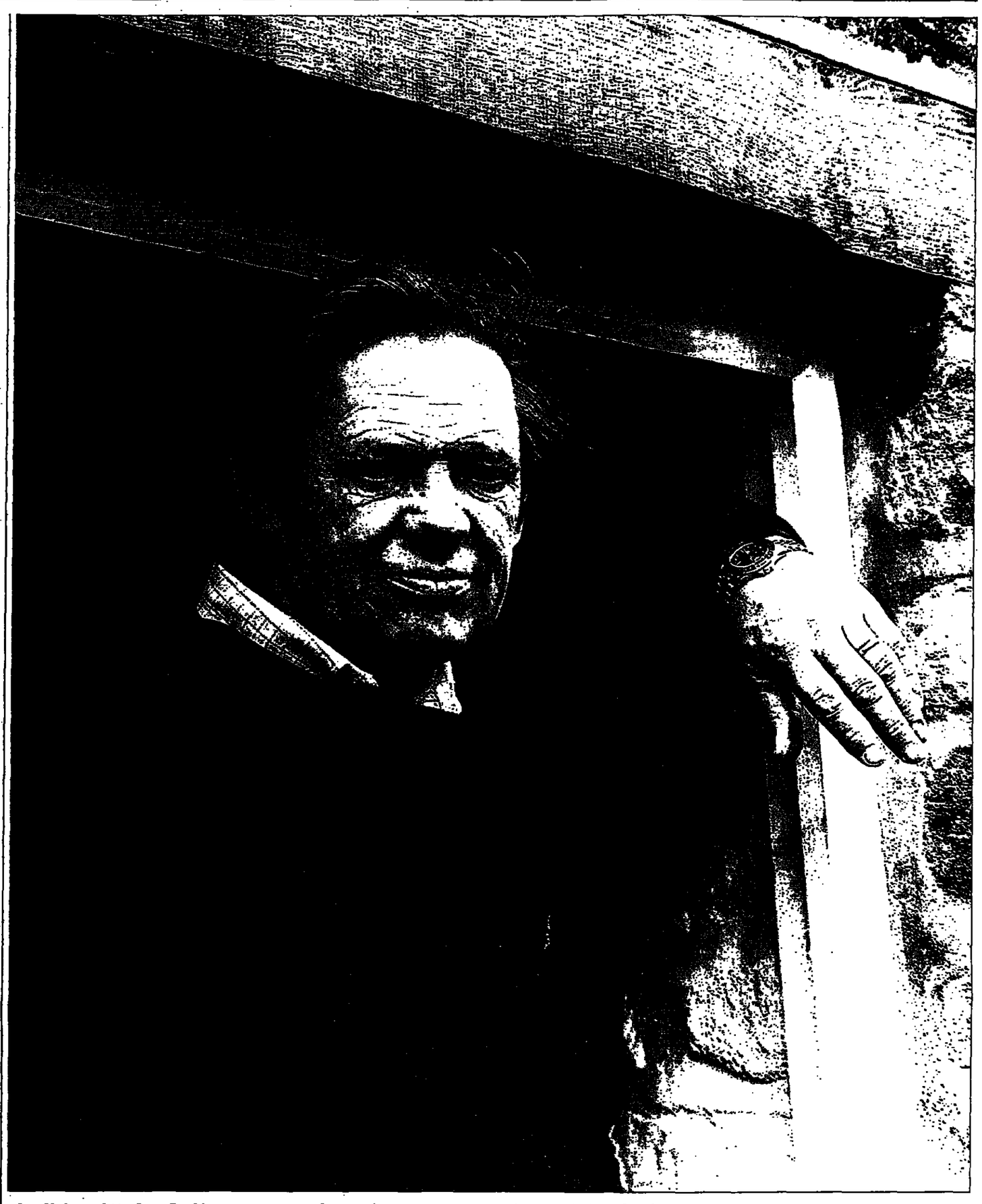
1. (c) John Major, according to an interview in *Cosmopolitan*. Tony *Blair* said his most significant moment was becoming leader of the Labour Party.
2. The planned party to celebrate the wedding of Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit. The wedding was called off because of "obsessive and intrusive" media interest.
3. Michael Jackson. These were his reported words on holding his son for the first time. He wore his own surgical mask for the birth.
4. The Harrovian, which advised alumni (fees £13,000 a year) to swing left.
5. The Rover 100, which was voted "bottom of the class" by Top Gear magazine just a week after being criticised by the Road Research Laboratory on safety grounds.
6. Kenneth Branagh, whose friends advised him to see a psychiatrist over his career doubts.
7. Oliver McCall, who suffered a technical knock-out when he burst into tears during his world heavyweight title fight with Lennox Lewis.
8. (d) Norma Major. A leather-bound copy of her book on Chequers sold for £170,000 at a Conservative Party fund-raising dinner organised by Lord Archer.
9. (a) Sylvester Stallone, for his role in Daylight.
10. Millionaires, according to new figures produced by Datamonitor.
11. Ecuador, where President Abdala Bucaram, aka "El Loco", was ousted.
12. Elton John, who refused to accept the noise limits that the authorities in Hong Kong impose on pop concerts.
13. Lord Runcie, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, explaining the fall in church attendance.
14. (c) Richard Wilson, who plays the disbelieving Victor Meldrew in One Foot in the Grave. He was banned from driving for two weeks and fined £140.
15. W H Smith, which announced it was removing porn mags from most of its stores.

How you rate

0-4 Hustler
5-9 Knave
10-14 Playboy
15 Harrovian

After majoring in success in his early years — from head boy to the Treasury to ambassador, life took a nasty turn for Peter Jay

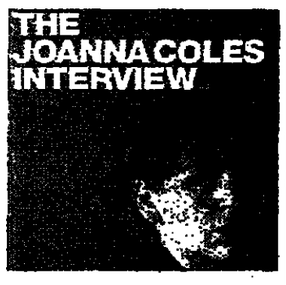
Late bloom of a golden boy



'I loved being ambassador to Washington. Every atom of one's being was harnessed to the thing one had been born'

PHOTOGRAPH: SIMON MCCABE

THE JOANNA COLES INTERVIEW



I HAVE met Peter Jay before. We once sat next to each other during dinner at the Oxford Union. I had been dispatched by my then employer The Spectator, which was sponsoring that evening's debate, to ensure that the magazine's logo was sufficiently visible. Crashing down on the adjacent chair, Jay demanded my name and, as I replied, I could see him flicking through his mental Rolodex.

Registering precisely nothing, he then turned his back and ignored me for the rest of the evening — particularly rude as I was isolated at the end of the table. Fortunately, he displayed more concern for the admittedly prettier blonde, Rhodes scholar on his left, with whom at one point he apparently disappeared. So it's fair to say I don't feel entirely neutral as I enter the Balzac, a small restaurant near BBC Television Centre in west London where Jay has been economics and business editor for the past seven years. I will also admit to a flicker of glee when I read earlier this week in the Daily Mail that Jay, appointed Our Man in Washington aged just 40, refused to celebrate his 60th birthday this week on the grounds that he's now too fat.

Is this true, I demand, as I arrive at our table and catch him mid-mouthful of peanuts. "Ha!" he barks, "Ha! Well, it's true I'm on the Nigel Lawson diet." And did he celebrate his 60th birthday? "Absolutely NO. My mother came to stay for the weekend, and we had a nice supper, she and I and my wife. We got *through* the day. Sixty is a terrible, *terrible* number." And he rips apart a piece of French bread which I'm pretty sure isn't on the Lawson diet.

"I suppose," he continues, "it's that getting older leads only to one place. And that's a big negative fact, definitely negative, *immensely* negative and it would be much better if it was 20 not 60."

Oh dear, oh dear. But how different Peter Jay's life must have looked to him, or to anyone taking a brief glance at the young Jay aged 20. Son of the Cabinet minister Douglas; scholar, head boy at Winchester with a place assured at Christ Church, Oxford's most beautiful college, from where he would graduate after National Service, with a first in PPE, a bride in Margaret Callaghan and a job in the Treasury.

"I was very good at successes," he says rather grimly, reaching for the butter which I'm absolutely sure isn't on the Lawson diet. "My very early life was all about ticking off successes. I did success, success was easy to me. I did a *huge* amount of it. It was only in my late twenties that I had a proper think about this and concluded that if I left the Treasury — which I did — to go into journalism, the next five years would be much more interesting."

Which they undoubtedly were. Indeed, it is hard to think of another contemporary figure who can boast such a giddily varied CV. From the Treasury it was off to be economics editor of the Times, presenter of Weekend World and then ambassador in Washington. "I loved it," he says, swallowing his Dover sole (grilled, no butter) when we talk about America. "Every atom of one's being was harnessed to doing the thing one had been born to."

The thing one had been born to... We will come back to Jay's sense of self-worth in a moment. But back in the 1970s, with three good-looking, healthy young children, what could possibly go wrong? The Royal Television Society appointed him Male Personality of the Year; Time magazine solemnly fingered him as one of Britain's potential world leaders. "Yes, and do you know who the others were," he says dryly. "Nick Scott, Prince Charles and Shirley Williams."

And then something did go wrong. Mrs Thatcher was elected and wanted her own chap posted to 3100 Massachusetts Avenue; meanwhile, Jay's marriage hit trouble. His wife embarked on a strangely public affair with Carl Bernstein, the sexier of the two Washington Post reporters of Watergate fame, while Jay himself managed to get their nanny pregnant. It must have been a very different family group who — setting out only three years earlier with such hope — eventually trooped back to London in 1980, where Jay promptly took up as chief executive of TV-am.

There he won the franchise but lost the internal politics. Three years later he was booted out, only to crop up shortly after as chief tie-straightener to Robert Maxwell, a position he held until his old friend John Birt summoned him — some claim in a rare display of benevolence — to the BBC.

Workwise life was unexpectedly turbulent, while his personal life continued to be choppy. In 1986 he and Margaret finalised their divorce. What effect did the end of their relationship have on him? "There are not words vivid enough to describe it," he replies, the colour slipping gently from his face.

"You are *destroyed*. You are *shattered*. You are *annihilated*. What other words?" he mumbles slowly. "The language does not have words adequate to describe the devastation, what else can you say? *It is the destruction of the central thing in your life.* I can't imagine a more terrible event. Death ... possibly."

'It is the destruction of the central thing in your life. I can't imagine a more terrible event'

He's clearly moved and I find myself moved for him and rather impressed at his honesty, it's rare to meet an interviewee brave enough to admit how bloody terrible they felt. It didn't seem a relief then, I ask clumsily? He gives an odd, strangled laugh. Well, I suggest lamely, it's a relief for some people. "I'm not talking about other people's experiences, you asked about mine," he snaps, shuddering at the offer of pudding but weakening at the prospect of espresso.

I point out that the language he uses to describe the break-up seems very violent. "Well I felt about it in very violent terms. Oh God," he cries, suddenly distraught and brandishing a half-eaten chocolate mint crisp. "I certainly shouldn't be eating *this!*"

The figures suggest that more men than women regret divorce, does he? "I regretted ... Regret is not the right word. I fought *tooth and nail* against that conclusion for many, *many* years. But there came a point when it became ... well, I suspect it had been clear to others for a very long time ... entirely absurd to go on resisting it. I resisted it for about five years, beyond the point when everyone else thought I was crazy." With hindsight are there things he could have done? "Oh sure, at the very least it was 50 per cent my fault, if not 100 per cent."

But the difficulty is that one can never see it at the time? "Of course. You don't go round doing things which will have that consequence, especially if you regard the consequence to be as terrible as I did. The problem is to understand better than you do why you are so ... perhaps, well, difficult to live with."

Jay has a good reputation to work with, so what *is* he like to live with? "I snore." No, no I say, that's what you're like to *sleep* with. "I pull the bedclothes on to my side," he grins. Is he any fun? "I hope so, except in the post-Nigel Lawson era. My wife constantly tells me I'm not a barrel of laughs but we hope this is a transitional phase and I shall cheer up again. I had a glass of wine for my birthday and I've lost a stone and a half in four weeks!"

He never once mentions his second wife Emma, a garden-furniture designer, by name, which I find odd, though he frequently mentions their three children. Does he feel conscious of trying harder in his second marriage? "Oh yes, I went into my second marriage absolutely determined to make sure that will never happen again. Understanding, give and take. Try harder."

He strikes me as depressed and I wonder if he's ever considered therapy? "NO!" Does he ever worry he might get depressed? "No, NO. I'm the last person *on earth* to get depressed!" and he says it so quickly I'm unconvinced.

The dinner at Oxford floats back into view and I'm reminded of the sheer blatancy with which he turned his back. Is he aware he's considered preposterously arrogant? "Ha! I used to try and figure out what arrogance actually was. If it means that you believe fate will treat you better than others, or that you are laying upon some God-given privilege, I don't think so." *The thing one had been born to...*

"If it means being impatient and letting it show, or disagreeing with things which you think are silly or stupid, then yes. I don't think it's a criticism I'm worried about."

And what about his fabled attractiveness to women? He starts, then looks thrilled. "I didn't know I *had* a fabled attractiveness! I've always thought I was rather a *loser* where women were concerned! Not a complete flop but er, well I've never suffered from arrogance in *that* respect! No doubt there have been times when I've been selfish in boy/girl relationships, but only in very short-term ones as it were."

I'm struck by a 60-year-old man using the term boy/girl relationships. "I think that like most men I have an overwhelming presumption that any advance I make will be rejected, therefore I don't make them. That is the real state of mind of most men, most of the time. And it's certainly *my* state of mind most of the time."

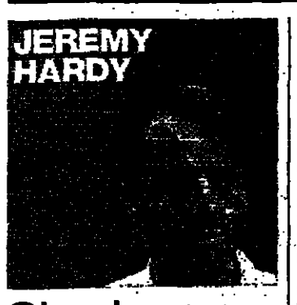
I find this unlikely. Jay has never been short of admirers. After Margaret and the nanny, he lived briefly with Lizzie Spender, daughter of the poet, before marrying again. And I can't get rid of the image of him confidently salivating over the blonde Rhodes scholar.

"Well you have to remember that most men spend the first 15-20 years of their sexually mature lives basically being rejected by women who a) have less interest in boy/girl matters than men do, and b) are more interested in older men. *Then*, they spend the next 20 years being on the other side of that asymmetry! It's a very amazing shock when you discover at the age of 35 that there is a two-way street!" Two-way street? "That boys can be interested in girls as well as girls being interested in boys! Mm, possibly even more so."

But surely this can't have been Jay's own experience, because he and Margaret married straight after university, so what's he talking about? "I did get married very young," he says absently. "Um, it was obviously not one's experience in relation to the one that one married. But in relation, I don't know, my experience was so ludicrously odd. That, er, I was into my twenties before I'd ever even met a girl. I mean *met*. Really! Um, all-boys prep school, all-boys school, all-boys in naval ships, all-boys colleges. Um, so it was all very amazing."

I'm still puzzling at his use of boy/girl when the photographer arrives. "Enough of all that," says Jay loudly, struggling to squeeze out from behind the table. "Bit ... er ... bit close to the bone."

JEREMY HARDY



Shadow boxing in a murky grey world

THERE is something indecent about Labour's attempt to use the beef crisis to hasten the *Government's demise*. They would argue that they are trying to prevent more damage being done to the country. The Tories certainly seem to be trashing the place before they leave, and it may be that there is real concern that Tony Blair will arrive in Number 10 to find spray paint all over the walls and a turd in the middle of the living-room carpet.

So we might imagine that Labour are driven by the noblest of motives, were it not for the fact that they are actually helping the Government to push legislation through. Only after uproar among senior judges, Conservative peers and others to the left of the shadow cabinet, did Labour start a belated attempt to moderate the Crime Bill. And now we have the bizarre spectacle of Howard complaining that Jack Straw has betrayed him. In truth, Howard is vastly exaggerating Labour's change of heart. He has a hard time shaking off Straw's support. Never has the term "shadow" been more appropriate.

But Labour are simultaneously trying to bring the Government down over their "incompetent" handling of BSE. It is always a worrying sign when the opposition speak of Conservative incompetence. The word implies that there's nothing inherently wrong with being Conservatives but that the Government simply aren't very good at it. Throughout the 80s, Labour frontbenchers spoke of unemployment as though it was a poor reflection of the Government's handling of the economy. The reality is that mass unemployment was a policy successfully executed. I think the Tories make excellent Conservatives.

These days, Labour try to argue that inflation is not as low as the Chancellor says it is. They see more mileage in this than in the fact that unemployment statistics are now so manipulated that no-one even bothers to remember what the official figure is any more. No one now believes that the published unemployment figures are anything other than an inspired leap of imagination. But we do accept that inflation is low. Why wouldn't it be?

It is true that the Government has handled the beef crisis clumsily *in recent months. But to give* them credit, they did a pretty good job of keeping a lid on it up until then. BSE came to light several years ago and, after a brief flurry of mad cow jokes, it vanished as a political issue. It was not until lamb was being substituted in the most inappropriate recipes that New Labour realised that there was political capital in this beef thing.

And this is the issue over which they hope to defeat the Government next week. That depends on Unionist MPs briefly forgetting that they are fanatical right-wing zealots and siding with Labour. Both main parties have been very nice to the Westminster Orangemen in recent years, realising that there are times when peripheral issues like the future of Ireland must be set aside in the interests of parliamentary horse-trading.

Mo Mowlam has been careful not to inflame Unionist bigotry by taking her Northern Ireland brief too seriously. It would be tempting for someone in her job to campaign vigorously on such matters as the *dubious conviction of Danny* McNamee or the incarceration without charge of the pregnant Roisin McAliskey. Ms Mowlam is like one of those lottery winners who appear to have absolutely no appreciation of the opportunities afforded by their situation, and leave the rest of us gasping, "What wouldn't I do if I were in her shoes?"

Opponents of PR needn't look far for evidence of the influence a few maniacs can have on minority government

And let it not be forgotten that the last Labour government was kept in power by Paisley and friends. That is why plans to legalise homosexuality in the Six Counties were shelved. Opponents of proportional representation don't need to look as far as Israel to find evidence of the terrible influence a few religious maniacs can have over a minority government.

At present, however, Labour will find it extremely hard to drive a wedge between the Conservative Party and its friends in the North. The Ulstermen may be embarrassed by the fact that there are angry farmers in their constituencies, just as the occasional Tory MP notices that there's an endangered hospital in his, but they are unlikely to bring the Government down.

So, Major will soldier on to the bitter end. But that is not to say that Labour should sit on their hands until the election. There are all sorts of things Jack Straw could be doing instead of seeking meetings with Michael Howard to pass the time.

For example, as Anthony Scivener QC wrote in Tuesday's Guardian, the Government are quietly bringing in a law on disclosure of evidence in criminal cases. Unless Opposition MPs wake up and do something about it, after April I we shall be lumbered with a law which will increase the likelihood of wrongful convictions and make it extremely hard to overturn them. As Scrivener says, non-disclosure secured the convictions of Judith Ward, the Maguires and the Birmingham Six. It is also a vital feature of the Danny McNamee case.

I only mention this because Labour seem to be short on ideas of what to do while still in opposition. I know it's a frustrating time for them so I thought they might like to make themselves useful.

Will Europe fawn before a brave British lion that yawns?

IT'S a national myth, peddled by British advertisers, that British advertising is the finest in the world. In fact, most of it is so smart-alecky, so drenched in irony and self-referential jokes, that few of us can even remember what product is being plugged. (Quick! What do Papa and Nicole drive? And that loathsome couple who race each other to work?)

Labour politicians tend to invest Conservative admen with almost magical powers, though watching the Tory PPB this week, I wondered if a single vote had been switched. As a voice-over intoned the usual nonsense about the Continent (apparently Labour are threatening us with job security, holidays, decent health care — the horrors which are bringing France and Germany to their knees) the screen showed a lion. I think the poor beast was supposed to be roaring in a British kind of way, then become so angry that he narrowed his eyes in contempt. Instead it looked as if he couldn't stop yawning, and then fell asleep as a silent commentary on the drivel he was hearing.

If this is the best the chaps in silly glasses can come up with, Labour hasn't too much to worry about.

A LETTER arrives from Harold Brookes-Baker of Burke's Peerage, no less. The new edition of the Burke's Peerage World Book of Hoggarts is ready for printing. Covering the history of Hoggarts from 1750 to 1997, it also contains a Hoggart International Directory listing "virtually every Hoggart household". There's a list of "historic Hoggart wills" ("I, Seth Hoggart, bequeath two groats and a broken adze to Goodwife Bartleby"). And all for £21.95.

Sadly, Mr Brookes-Baker may have forgotten that a year ago I bought the first edition of this great tome, thinking it might make a jokey present for my father. But though he has lived in the same house for more than 20 years, he is not listed. Nor is my brother, who has been in the phone book as long. (I am in twice, possibly because we have two phone lines, and the illiterate Bulgarians who must have compiled the work haven't figured that out.)

There are no World Books of Jones or Smiths, but if you have an unusual name, you are quite likely to get Mr Brooks-Baker's letter. Ignore it.

ONE reason why Stephen Dorrell has been so vilified for talking about the new Scottish assembly is that he's English. Consciously or not, most Scots take the view that they should be allowed to decide as they please, and that the English have no right to interfere in the argument.

'My name's Birnam Wood and I've come to Dunsinane to find out if you have enough life insurance'

That's another reason why they would be much better off going straight for full independence, rather than messing around with an assembly.

Because we in England rarely hear the arguments, you won't know that the current Tory line from Michael Forsyth is that Scotland has been ripping off the English for years, through an £8 billion-plus subsidy from the Exchequer. (This is reduced to around £6 billion if you allow for the oil.) Mr Forsyth also claims that, far from England having seized control of Scotland, "in 1603 we peaceably absorbed England and Wales by dynastic inheritance". This line, which translates as "don't let the English know, but we've got them just where we want them" may or may not work for the Unionists. But I doubt that it would impress the English. I don't suppose we'll see Scottish Nationalism becoming a great cause in the South, but I suspect that English opposition to Scottish separatism will soon start to shrivel, whatever Mr Major thinks.

VISCOUNT Cranborne is a charming fellow. Years ago he sat next to my wife at a dinner (his courtesy title meant nothing to her) and they discussed country houses. Her mother had one, she said. His family had one too, he added politely. It turned out that she meant a cottage in Devon for letting, and he meant Hatfield House, the seat of the Salisburys.

Now I see that John Major wants him as Chief of Staff during the election. No doubt he will do a fine job, but is bringing in a scion of one of the half-dozen grandest families in Europe really what John Major meant by a "classless society"?

JUST two weeks to go before the panto, and the cast are working unbelievably hard, reeling back from rehearsals around midnight. As I've said, the British middle classes usually put much more effort into their hobbies than into their work.

That's because the competition is much fiercer. Anyhow, it all looks extremely slick. Now and again one of the cast asks how I, as the scriptwriter, would "interpret" some part or other. It's tempting to do a Harold Pinter and tell them to distinguish between a three-dot pause and a four-dot pause, but I resist this and suggest they do their own thing.

Next year I'd love to try to broaden the whole idea of a panto and get away from the traditional stories (I never want to see another Aladdin).

My favourite was Macbeth: The Panto, because you could have a man with a briefcase enter and say, "Hi! my name's Birnam Wood and I've come to Dunsinane to find out if you have enough life insurance."

Macbeth has great panto characters — the witches, the porter, the ghost — but it also includes a murder, so I don't suppose it'll work.

SMALLWEED

BY WHAT mysterious alchemy, Smallweed has often wondered, was Margaret Thatcher transformed from dutiful Grantham maiden to the warrior queen who slew the affronting Argentines? Though detecting an early bossiness, her biographers never really answer that question. But thanks to a revelation last Wednesday, Smallweed can.

The National Film Theatre is presently showing the BBC TV recreation of the Wars of the Roses sequence which the RSC staged in the sixties, for which Peter Hall and John Barton squeezed Shakespeare's four plays into three. In the second, Edward IV, shown last Wednesday, Margaret of Anjou, queen to the cowering Henry VI, is seen at her most imperious — "stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless" as one of her critics puts it. Suddenly Smallweed understood all. Thatcher must in the sixties have seen Peggy Ashcroft's performance, and modelled herself upon it thereafter. "Had I been there, which am a silly woman/the soldiers should have tossed me on their pikes/before I would have granted to that act": that is Margaret Mark I, bewraying Henry's agreement that his son shall never succeed the throne. But it's also, surely, Margaret Mark II, steaming all over Stevas, garrotting Gilmour, pulverising tremulous Prior and Pym...

MORE THAN THAT: such is the genius of Shakespeare that he even wrote lines which evoke the state of Margaret Thatcher post-1990. In Edward IV, Margaret of Anjou takes temporary refuge at the court of the King of France: "I was, I must confess/ Great Albion's Queen in former days" she tells them. "But now mischance hath trod my title down..."

A lawyer writes: You are about to make clear at this point, are you not, that you do not imply any comparison between any prime minister, living or dead, and the conduct of Queen Margaret in this production, when, having smeared the blood of his slaughtered son all over his face, Margaret mocks and taunts the doomed Duke of York as he waits for his execution?

Smallweed ripostes with alacrity: You have taken the words right out of my mouth.

TWO OR THREE years ago Smallweed used to chart with awed fascination a contest in the Mail on Sunday's Night and Day magazine to see which of two critics, William Leith (film) and Hunter Davies (TV), could more lavishly pepper the page with references to themselves. In the early stages, Davies led Leith, but then one significant day the younger man, Leith, came from behind to deploy 29 "I"s in 196 lines to Davies's 19 in 133. That meant 14.8 per cent of Leith's lines had an "I" in them, where Davies could muster a mere 14.3. Good to see from last Sunday's papers that these two have lost none of their magic. In an opinion column on changing fashions in interior decoration for the Observer, Leith played the perpendicular pronoun 40 times in 156 lines, a strike-rate of 25.1 per cent. Meanwhile in the Times magazine, Hunt was one of a cluster of former editors invited to pick a favourite contribution printed during his editorship. Godfrey Smith chose some Jilly Cooper. Magnus Linklater selected James Fox's investigation into the Lucan affair. Which contributor, do you suppose, caught Hunter's eye? Since there were hundreds he could have chosen, I shall give you a clue: *Edith Vaunser*. That's an anagram.

I AM fiercely rebuked, from Brighton, and chided, from Norwich, for not knowing that Louise Erdrich, whose choice of names for her characters I complained of here last week, is a native American, as are many of those she writes about. "Stony would he be of heart" writes kindly Tom Gordon "who could read far into old John Nanapush's narrative in Tracks of the loss of his family and his whole way of life in the influenza epidemic of 1918 without a tear. These are illustrious books ... so much better than anything written in these islands. Try them and be bowled over!" Thank you: I will. Meanwhile, a learned letter from London N6, taking up my suggestion that Meagles is the sort of name you'd expect in a Northwich Victoria striker, says this outfit recently sported a goal-scoring forward called Bunter, who has since disappeared. Where has he gone? Did he spend too long in the tuck shop? Did he get a red card from Queich? Does anyone know? If so, please say.

ANGUISHED telephone call from Swindon: the town is now full of bosomy blondes processing through the precincts in low-cut frocks even in the pouring rain. They are hoping, like the new tabloid super-star, Melinda Messenger, to catch the eyes of visiting snappers from the Sun and Daily Star. Memo to all concerned: what you will catch is less likely to be the eyes of the paparazzi than your death of cold. Also, all those young men who have told you this week they work for the Sun and Star: they do not.

"I AM not infallible, even if Gordon Brown thinks I am." — *Chancellor Kenneth Clarke on the Today programme, Wednesday.*

Stars of swinging London: for the South, Patsy Kensit, and for the North, Liam Gallagher

North-south deride

London is enjoying a revival as the most exciting and innovative city in Europe, argues **Andrew Neil.** Not so, insists **Terry Christian**, Manchester is, and always has been, the centre of the hip and happening universe

Dear Andrew,

SO according to those great observers of British culture, Newsweek (ahem), London is the most swinging place on planet earth. As an ex-editor of various publications I'm sure you'll understand the reasons why. One can imagine the editors' meeting at Newsweek.

"Hey listen we're not selling enough copies of our dull magazine — we need to hit the population centres of the English-speaking world hard, spark up some debate, get some publicity."

"What about doing something on the Limeys and their quaint culture, drinking, fornicating, The Beatles. I mean there's over 10 million people living in London, England, who, according to my figures, have one of the worst standards of life in the Western world, we could give them a feel-good factor, give them that 'so what if I do live in an overpriced, damp, cold one-bedroom apartment surrounded by crack dealers and homeless beggars and never seem to be able to afford to go out or have real interests, I live in the swingingest city of the nineties'. I mean, hell, we've been saying it about New York for years and it's worked."

"So you mean cover all that Goddamn awful Limey music and warm beer and uncoordinated fashion and those funny European sports they play. Good idea."

"Oh yeah, those Limeys love reading about themselves. Shit, most people in London need to justify why they chose to live there, anyway, so they are always keen to impress their friends in the small towns they originally come from with what a great time they have there."

"And don't forget culture, those Limeys love that and their pop music and those drugs they take."

"Oh sure, even though most of the top pop bands and drugs come from Manchester."

"What, Manchester, Connecticut?"

"No, some place, I think it might be in Scotland, or at least that's what some guy in London told me."

"Who cares. The publicity, the marketing, the media, they're all in London so here's your first class tickets, bring me the most swinging city in the world."

Yes Andrew, like the newspaper man in that John Ford movie, The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, says, "When the facts contradict the legend, print the legend." London — the most swinging city in the world, and Tottenham Hotspur will win the Premier League.

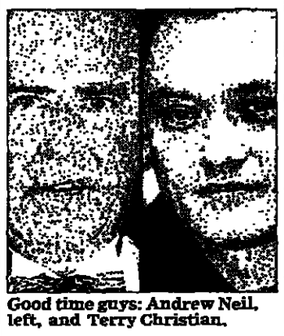
Terry Christian

Dear Terry,

I'M AFRAID you know as much about how American magazines operate as you do about the recent renaissance of London. Let's try to fill in your ignorance about both.

American magazines like Newsweek and the latest edition of Vanity Fair are not writing about London to increase their circulation here, which is a pittance of their worldwide sales: they're not telling the natives anything they don't know about their city already. No, they're educating the natives back in the States, and it improves our capital's image among Americans and encourages them to spend their dollars in London.

Whatever fantasies you weave



Good time guys: Andrew Neil, left, and Terry Christian.

about American editorial thought processes cannot detract from the fact that London is on a roll right now. Our capital is currently enjoying an international reputation for its fashion,music, food (who would have thought that!), films, creativity in everything from videos to Internet websites and being generally a civilised, exciting place to visit and live.

One of the ironies of this is that the more Eurosceptical we become, the more the rest of Europe seems determined to make London the capital of Europe. Paris, Rome, Berlin and Madrid all look longingly at London these days. Read the newspapers if you don't believe me.

London's pre-eminence does not detract from all the exciting things that are happening elsewhere in Britian. Indeed one of the good things about our country these days is the resurgence of our previously declining industrial centres like Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham and Glasgow. But the only city of real international status we possess is London

All the best,

Andrew

Dear Andrew,

LONDON, lovely place for a visit, but swinging ... er, forget it. Every football fan the world over knows Manchester United, and most are aware of Liverpool FC. As to music, well for a swinging capital, London hasn't had a music scene since punk rock back in 1976 and the biggest pop groups of the past 15 years have, by and large, come from Manchester. Oasis, Simply Red, M People, Take That, New Order, The Stone Roses, The Happy Mondays, The Smiths ... the list is endless.

I noted your letter talked about all areas of creativity from film-making to the Internet web sites. I imagine many of your fellow Scots may object to you referring to the biggest British movie of the last year — Trainspotting — as coming from London.

As to the computer industry, I'm sure you are aware that the world's first computer was built at Manchester University and the international website of the year for 1996 was won, not by Bill Gates's Microsoft empire, but by a Stockport lad with a small office in Manchester called Tony Meehan. It was Meehan who had the bright idea of puttingh the Football Association's Premier League on the Internet, and watched as it became the fifth most accessed site in the world.

Before any other city can attain the international recognition it deserves, it has first to experience the pernicious jealousy of London's assembled media. Remember Manchester's Olympic bid and the London media's reaction to it? I doubt that such derision was levelled at Barcelona by the media in Madrid when they were bidding for the Olympic games.

Terry

Dear Terry,

I'M PUZZLED: just because there are some exciting things happening elsewhere in the country — a fact I acknowledged in my first letter — you feel it necessary to run down London. It's illogical and probably the product of an unnecessary Mancunian chip.

Yes, Manchester has a fine music scene but London is a world class capital of music — an international leader in everything from rock to classical to opera. Even successful Manchester bands usually end up flocking to it. No city in the world can rival its musical diversity or depth. I'm also aware than Manchester has a vibrant night life, but London's night life has exploded in recent years, with a club scene which has young Americans and Europeans rushing to enjoy it. I'm surprised somebody with your street cred would wish to deny it.

There is a new buzz about London these days which almost everybody, visitors and citizens, is commenting about. The rest of the world is looking at us in admiration and envy.

I appreciate this might encourage the myopic tendencies of the London-centric media, which I regret as much as you (but then I'm doing something about it: I'm writing these words from The Scotsman's office in Edinburgh). But it was not the London media which lost Manchester the Olympics: the way the Olympic committee thinks and works, you never had a snowball in hell's chance. London is the only British city they'll come to.

That may be unfair but it's the way of the world. And, much as I admire Manchester's recent revival, to see yourselves as the Barcelona of Britain suggests unmerited delusions of grandeur. A whole lot more reviving will have to go on before you even come close.

Yours as aye, Andrew

Dear Andrew,

I ADMIT to being disappointed in both your lack of knowledge of the current music and club scene. I assure you that having an opinion as regards the unthinking cultural metrocentricity rife within media circles in London does not mean I have a chip on my shoulder, merely a valid point to make. London is a city for the well-off thirty-somethings, it is neither youthful nor vibrant, unless of course one counts the homeless on the streets and the number of beggars. Young people in London rarely go out, mainly because they can't afford to. As for foreign visitors sampling the nightlife, I think you'll discover most groovy youngsters around the world are well aware of Manchester as the music capital of Europe.

As to Mancunians flocking down to London, it's invariably to either pick up a fat cheque for DJing, or playing a gig, or to watch Manchester United win again at Wembley as the Government and sporting bodies surprisingly didn't deem it worthwhile to build a new national stadium in the north.

As for Barcelona being glamorous, prior to the Olympics it was a greasy backwater. Manchester does not have delusions of grandeur, we Mancunians know we're the hippest people in Britain

Terry

Dear Terry,

I FEAR there is no more to say. Your last letter is full of such drivel I would not know where to begin to correct it. When I see London caricatured so absurdly and Barcelona dismissed as a "greasy backwater" while Manchester is lauded as a Utopia, it's clear I'm dealing with a bigoted fantasist. So let's call it a day: I and the rest of the world will continue to enjoy the new confidence and dynamism of the nation's capital while you fester with your self-delusions in Manchester. Your exile can only be to London's benefit.

Andrew

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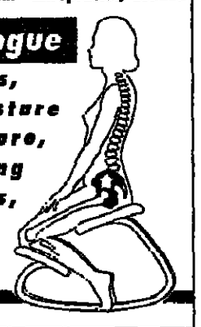

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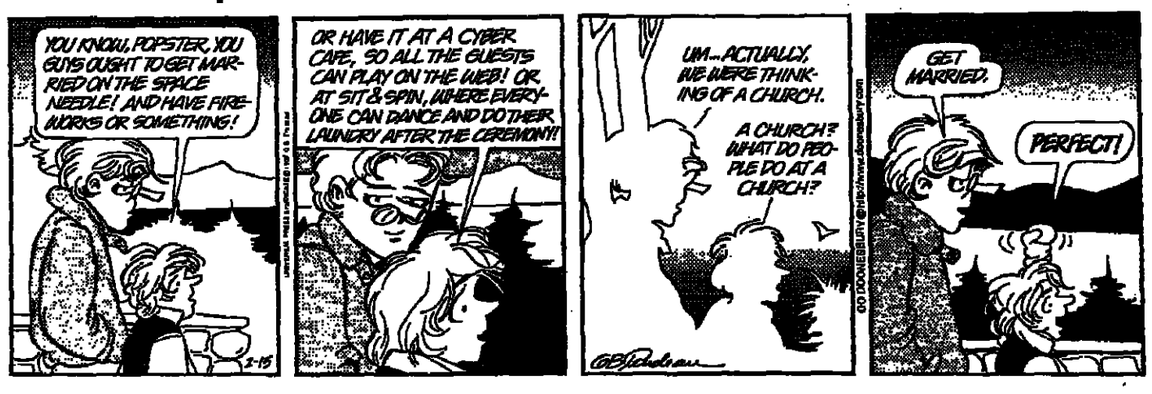
BY GARRY TRUDEAU



Playing the part: Aldrich Ames and Rosario with son Paul
PHOTOMONTAGE: JIM POWELL

Secrets and lies

What makes a trusted agent betray his country and colleagues? On June 13, 1985 **Aldrich Ames**, a CIA officer, passed the names of 10 US spies to the KGB, who murdered them. Did he do it for money — $3 million? Or love? Jailed for life, here he justifies his actions

BETRAYED: General Dimitri Polyakov, CIA's greatest asset

BETRAYED: KGB Major Sergey Motorin, code-name Gauze

BETRAYED: KGB Lt Col Valery Martynov, code name Gentile

'Rick Ames would have known exactly what he was doing: he was sentencing the victim to death. He would have had my blood, too, had I not managed to escape.'
Oleg Gordievsky, former KGB officer who claimed he was betrayed by Ames

'It's the betrayal that I can't understand. How can you ever justify betraying the people closest to you?'
R Patrick Watson, FBI

'Does it really matter why he did it? He killed people, it is as simple as that'
Relative of Gennady Varenik, CIA spy executed by the KGB

'Can Ames wash my father's blood so easily from his hands? It is not a game when your father lies in an unmarked grave'
Son of an executed spy

'Look at Polyakov. The guy was a grandfather. He was retired. He was living in his dacha playing with his grandchildren. Why did Rick have to tell the KGB about him?'
Sandy Grimes, CIA

FUNNY thing about actors. I've always thought of Ronald Reagan this way and I noticed this in me, too. If you play a role, say you play a role as a pilot in a play and you get wrapped up in it, you convince yourself that you are a pilot although, of course, you can't fly.

I always thought Ronald Reagan was playing the role of a president even when he was the President. He became the role that was in his head. Once he figured out what that role was, he knew exactly what he was supposed to do.

I know that I often feel artificial as a person, as if I am somehow forced into playing some role or have drifted into playing roles that are different from who I actually am. Sometimes it's because I don't like or want to do what I'm doing, sometimes it's because I feel that somehow, in ways not clearly understood or articulable, I'm not doing or being what I am or want to be. There is a relationship between acting and role-playing in espionage. The crucial difference is this: in the theatre an audience voluntarily suspends its disbelief and joins the actor in creating an entertaining illusion. This is not the case in espionage.

In some instances, a case officer will choose a role to play. The purpose of his performance, however, is not the mutual construction of an entertaining illusion, it is exploitation through deception.

And this is where another talent is required that goes beyond acting. It is the ability to assess vulnerability, figure out your target's desires and then construct a reality that entices that target. This demands role-playing at an extreme because the purpose is to deceive and manipulate. It is also a betrayal of trust.

The essence of espionage, even the most innocuous sort, is betrayal of trust. One might almost say that this is the defining element, because without it, there is no espionage.

How does this relate to me personally? I lacked the talent and skills of a naturally gregarious person. What I did have, however, was the ability to focus on a target, establish a relationship, manipulate myself and himself into the frame of mind I aimed for and then make the approach. I had the ability to do it as myself or as another person altogether — businessman, academic; rich, poor; married, unmarried; liberal, conservative.

Of course, deception always involves manipulation. I guess the role-playing was essential to hide who I really am. But again, how different is that? This is how we all are, is it not?

Ames joined the CIA as a trainee in 1967. From the late 1970s until 1992, he was at the heart of CIA investigations of the KGB with knowledge of all of the agency's Russian agents. He was based in Washington and New York, and later Turkey, Rome and Mexico

BY THE early 1980s I was really beginning to change how I perceived the agency and intelligence. We were getting really good — I mean first-class — political information about the Soviets. We also had our spy satellites sending us back intelligence.

What this data kept telling us was that we were disproportionally stronger than the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, that Soviet forces couldn't compete with us. The bottom line was that, with only the most minor exceptions, we were consistently superior militarily.

It didn't matter whether we were talking about our bombers, our nuclear warheads, our megatonnage, our missiles; we were light-years ahead of them. The Soviets' only military advantage was more men.

We consistently drew a picture of a Soviet Union that never would decide to fight a war against us. And yet, decade after decade, the political leadership in both parties ignored that intelligence. They were committed to running around screaming, "The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming".

I knew that much of what I was doing was for nothing and I began to realise it was just part of a silly game.

When I became branch chief [Ames was promoted head of the CIA's Soviet operations in 1983], I collected all the studies the agency had written on Soviet cases over the previous 10 to 15 years. As I studied these cases, it suddenly occurred to me that no serious thought had ever been given to examining the overall philosophy of what was happening.

Now here I am, maybe six to eight months into my job and I'm thinking, "My God, I'm the biggest expert on the KGB that this entire division has! How can that be?" I said to myself, none of these people has a grasp of reality of the KGB, the Soviet Union and how it works.

At first I thought, "is it possible that I am just smarter than everyone else?" While that was very satisfying, deep down I knew it couldn't be true. I really respected and admired many of my colleagues. And then I figured out what was happening.

You see, no one really took seriously what all the Soviet agents we had handled over the years had told us. Regardless of what they told us, we always assumed that the KGB had all the resources in the world.

Do you know how many full-time officers the Seventh Directorate of the KGB in Moscow really has doing surveillance? — 250 assigned to follow people. That is not many; you would be shocked to know how many the FBI has just to follow Soviets in New York City alone.

The KGB doesn't have enough tape recorders for its officers. And it certainly doesn't have enough transcribers fluent in English to sit around and listen to every American telephone call that comes into Moscow. The KGB is like any government bureaucracy — it has limited resources and it has to use them the best way that it can.

But we never wanted to believe this because it was important for us to believe in the myth of the invincible tiger. Why? Because we wanted to be an invincible tiger too, and we couldn't justify ourselves to Congress and the American public unless we told them that the KGB had to be stopped.

By 1983 Ames had separated from his first wife and was living back in Washington with Maria del Rosario Casas Dupuy (known as Rosario), a Colombian diplomat he had met while based in Mexico City and who became his second wife. In 1994 she was sentenced to five years in prison for her part in the betrayal

I returned to Washington from Mexico City excited by the prospects of renewal, deeply in love with Rosario, and thinking of a future full of new possibilities. I was looking forward to caring for and being cared for in ways I had never thought of before. I was vividly aware of how I, myself, had thrown away my first marriage.

I really looked at myself as an exile of sorts, looking ahead as an immigrant to a new life. There were practical problems: confronting Nan [his firstwife], getting a divorce, getting Rosario here and adjusted to our new life. Still, I felt confident.

The reality was both promising and rebuffing. The divorce dragged. I felt anxious and desperate over my financial prospects. I had to pay off debts of about $35,000, plus $300 per month over a three-and-a-half year period (in alimony). I could have got some guidance, but instead I convinced myself I was in this huge hole and didn't have any choice but to do what I did.

Now I see things differently. The truth is that things weren't really that desperate, even though I had convinced myself they were. That says something about me. You see, I really didn't have to do what I did.

SO WHY did I do it? At the time, I told myself it was for the money. And that is what I still tell people. I say, "Let's be clear about this. There is no question, I did it for the money." But now I am wondering if that is really an accurate answer. Was it just that? Or was getting the money just a way for me to excuse or justify what I had wanted to do all along?

I am certain that I was genuinely feeling desperate. But this continues to beg the real question. Why did I immediately think that I had to do something illegal? I never even thought about sitting down with a credit counsellor. Why did I descend immediately into thinking of selling out my country?

Now that's the real question, isn't it? Why did this betrayal come so easily to me?

A lot of the barriers that should have stopped me from betraying my country were gone. The first barrier was [the idea] that political intelligence matters. It doesn't.

Our foreign policy is conducted in such a massively internal and political way that there is virtually no chance of any outside influence altering it. On a tactical level, yes, good intelligence matters. If it had told us that the Kremlin was about to start a war, of course that would have been important but the truth is that no one in our government really pays attention to political intelligence because there are too many other agendas.

Another barrier that collapsed had to do with what others had done. Henry Kissinger crossed the line when he helped prepare the Soviets for the SALT II negotiations. James Angleton [former CIA chief] betrayed agents who had helped us. He used them and sent them back knowing that they would be imprisoned or killed. Now I realise these men's actions do not excuse mine, but they did help grease that slope.

I also had come to believe that the CIA was a morally corrupt and dangerous institution. It is all about maintaining and expanding American imperial power, which I had come to think was wrong.

By 1985 I also felt I knew more than anyone else about the real Soviet threat, and I did not believe that what I was about to do would harm this country. Telling them the names of their traitors did not risk putting us at war or threaten our military superiority. And finally, I personally felt totally alienated from my own culture. I did not feel any sense of loyalty to what mass culture had become. I did not feel part of our society.

The truth is that there was only one barrier left, and that was one of personal loyalty to the people I knew and, unfortunately, it was not a very strong one.

How does treason fit into all of this? In some ways, not at all. I would love to say that I did what I did out of some moral outrage over our country's acts of imperialism or as a political statement out of anger toward the CIA or even a love for the Soviet Union. But the sad truth is that I did what I did because of money and I can't get away from that.

Now let me explain something else. I was afraid. Falling in love with Rosario was difficult, conflicted, but it also seemed to me to be a matter of life and death. My failures with my first wife, my sense of loneliness and alienation from warmth and humanity, all convinced me that if I failed in loving Rosario, only a kind of living death or suicide remained for me. I could only survive if I could find a way for *us* to survive.

And it was money that would make us possible and, therefore, make our love a lasting one. I wanted a future. I wanted what I saw we could have together. Taking the money was essential to the re-creation of myself.

I was not worried about the KGB pressuring me after I got its $50,000. They were not going to blackmail me. People ask why I turned in retired agents no longer spying. You must understand that I was totally alone. I couldn't tell anyone.

But even beyond a sense of danger, it was this feeling — my God, I had talked to the KGB! I had sold out! I was suddenly a man with no one to help me. And so I kept saying to myself: What to do? What to do? I thought the cash from the KGB would solve all my problems, but now I had to worry about security, survival, protecting myself.

So you see, my turning to the KGB was actually a great act of cowardice. I decided to let the KGB worry about keeping me safe. I decided not to deal with the enormity of what I had done. The way not to deal with it was by giving the KGB everything that I knew in one sitting, not because I wanted millions of dollars, but because it was the easiest way for me to get a sense of relief. I was never an admirer of the Soviet system, but I do feel a sense of continuing obligation and gratitude to the KGB, because they stuck with me.

R James Woolsey, director of the CIA, has called Ames a "serial killer" and compared him to Benedict Arnold, a patriot officer in the American Revolution whose name has become an epithet in America for traitor after he fought for the British

FIRST let me address the "serial killer" charge. I did not execute anyone, did I? And, if our courts had retained capital punishment for espionage, a number of the agents whom I betrayed would have had blood on their hands, too.

The men I betrayed knew what they were doing. They knew the risks. Do you believe any of them would have hesitated to have reported me if they had learned my name? So their deaths, while sad to me, are not really my responsibility. They have no one to blame but themselves for putting their lives in danger. This does not mean that I don't feel some guilt. But these were not innocent men.

My immediate motivation to con the Soviets was purely financial, but my choice foreshadowed a more complex mixture of motives. The fact that I could even conceive of the con game that I implemented demonstrates a striking inhibition, and one must wonder: what were some of the elements — beyond a mid-life crisis and a new wife — which prompted such eagerness?

The easy answer is to blame Rosario, to say that I was afraid that I would lose her unless I had enough money to keep her happy, and that is what I told myself at first. That she was to blame.

But the truth is that Rosario hadn't demanded that I have great sums of money when we met. I was the one who was convinced it was necessary.

Why did I do this? I had never cared about or been interested in money or even accumulating things before I met her. Even after I began getting these large amounts, I never controlled the money well. I mean, I like comfort, good food, toys such as the Jaguar, but I proved to be too generous with my friends, indulgent with Rosario, and even careless about the money I was paid.

I have come to believe that blaming Rosario is a very superficial reason. The real blame lies in my self-doubt and my own fears. I was convinced that I had to have money because not having it was a public confession of weakness and inadequacy on my part. Having the money became more important, not because of what I could buy with it, but because of what it said about me. What did it say? It said Rick Ames was not a failure.

ANGER, indignation and bitterness are felt by many toward me. The anger of the public, the press, many government officials — all these "outsiders" — is natural and understandable. When authors scream that I killed 10 men, I feel very little — whether guilt, shame, or even embarrassment. But I understand why they react this way. It is normal, based on how little they know.

When it comes to the "insiders" — people such as James Woolsey, most agency officers, and the FBI — their screams of indignation are literally offensive to me. I don't mean their genuine anger at my actions and betrayal. I'm talking about their agonising over the injustice of it all, how I spilt the blood of innocent men, and their amazement over how I could do what I did!

What hypocrites! What do they think Gordievsky, Varenik and Polyakov [CIA and MI6 agents betrayed by Ames] were all about? Prove to me that I am different from your heroes. Their hand-wringing and tears are institutionalised, bureaucratised and sanitised hypocrisy.

Do I feel guilt? Of course, but it is not their words that bring shame. It is when I stand before former friends, colleagues and bosses that I hide my face. I am ashamed for two reasons: I betrayed the personal and professional trust which existed between me and them; and I betrayed the deep commitment that I had made to the agents who trusted me. In both cases it is the personal trust that I betrayed, and for that I have no explanation, only sorrow. Betrayal and trust. Is this not where we started?

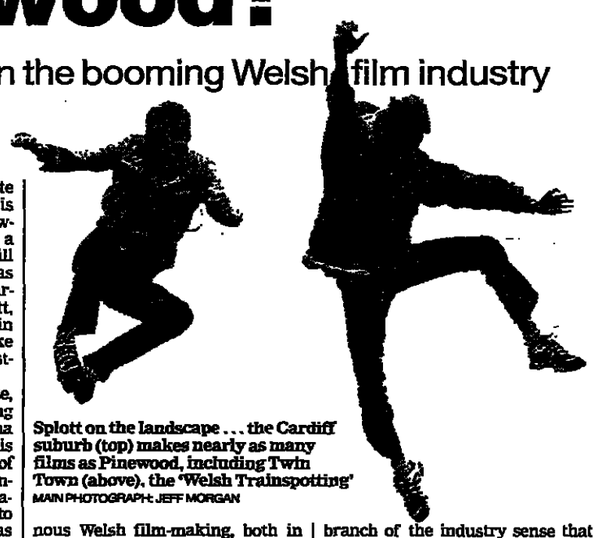
So now you have heard my life story, stripped bare. Am I ashamed? Of course, but let me be clear. I am ashamed of the harm that I have done to Rosario, Paul [his son], and even myself. I am ashamed of the personal betrayal. But for those who have feasted on my tragedy for their own glorification, I feel nothing but contempt.

This is an edited extract from Confessions of a Spy: The Real Story of Aldrich Ames, by Pete Earley published by Hodder & Stoughton on February 20. To order a copy for the special price of £18 (RRP £20) call Guardian Interactive on 0500 600102. Earley, a former Washington Post reporter, obtained Ames's testimony in a series of interviews at the Alexandria (Virginia) Detention Centre

arts

Newport was the new Seattle. So is Splott the new Hollywood?

Brian Logan on the booming Welsh film industry



Splott on the landscape ... the Cardiff suburb (top) makes nearly as many films as Pinewood, including Twin Town (above), the 'Welsh Trainspotting'
MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MORGAN

SPLOTT. It's not quite Hollywood. The word is yet to be erected in towering white letters on a Welsh hillside to thrill the tourists. And when I was served curried chicken from a caravan in the car park in Splott, Cardiff, on a drizzly Saturday in November, I didn't exactly feel like I was in on something big, a first-ever in the history of cinema.

But inside an old warehouse, Elidir Productions are filming Cameleon, a first world war drama due for release at the end of this year. It's a film about the horrors of war. It's also the first Welsh language film intended for international distribution — thanks to S4C, the Welsh Channel 4. S4C has pledged to fund at least two features like it a year specifically for cinema release. Something is stirring.

While films from England, Scotland and Ireland were all handsomely represented in this week's Oscar nominations, the Welsh again stayed at home — not merely to admire the greenness of their valleys but to make the films that next year might be jostling for attention with Hollywood's finest. For the S4C initiative merely capitalises on an upsurge in indigenous Welsh film-making, both in the Welsh language and, for the first time, in English. One of these, Kevin Allen's Twin Town, produced by Danny Boyle and Andrew McDonald and billed as the Welsh Trainspotting, last week sparked a high-octane censorship wrangle over its sickly comic portrayal of vigilante violence. It's a development that, in these publicity crazy days, may well represent a coming-of-age for the Welsh movie.

Even those involved in the less controversial Welsh language branch of the industry sense that their time has come. Cameleon's producer, Emlyn Davies, was commissioning editor at S4C's inception in the early eighties and oversaw a mini-revolution in Welsh production, when a glut of independent companies were set up to fill S4C's schedules. Fifteen years on there are more than 120 of them.

The slow swell of activity in the eighties gained further impetus when Hedd Wyn — an elegiac life of the shepherd poet Ellis Evans, who was awarded the Bardic chair at the Eisteddfod six weeks after dying at the Somme — was nominated for Best Foreign Film Oscar in 1992. "Hedd Wyn gave the whole Welsh industry amazing attention and credibility," says Huw Jones, chief executive of S4C. "After its success you didn't have to explain to people who you were. Before the Oscars the reaction was, 'Where the heck is Wales?' Now you see that changing."

Wales's current drive intends to build belatedly on the film's success by wooing foreign partners and buyers, and countering what Davies describes as the M25 syndrome — the resistance of London, and England as a whole, to co-operate with, or even watch, Welsh language productions. "We said to ourselves, 'If we can't break into London, let's look to the rest of Europe.' "

Huw Jones wants to "create an infrastructure in which the talent that makes films will be retained in Wales". One such talent is Ceri Sherlock. The former theatre director, now behind the camera on Cameleon, is a passionate champion of home-grown film-making, even if he regrets that only certain types of film can be made in his native tongue. With Cameleon, he says, "we are unfortunately bolstering the feeling that Welsh language films must be set in the past. A growing culture really has to look at the present and future." With a language that until now been in decline for decades, it's difficult, Sherlock agrees, to make convincing films in which "they're flying helicopters and speaking in Welsh".

Given this situation — and that Welsh producers are under constant pressure to film simultaneous English versions of the "foreign" language films they shoot — why make films in Welsh at all? Huw Jones starts from the premise that there may be aspects of Welsh culture that can only be expressed in Welsh. He also believes that distributing Welsh language cinema internationally is a step of some significance, "because how exportable you are is very much now the definition of a successful culture. And one way of gaining confidence is to be able to tell yourself that you can do something just as well as your neighbours".

So where does that leave the English-speaking majority in Wales? Playing catch-up, says Marc Evans, director of House Of America, one of an unprecedented three home-grown English language films due this year. "The politics of an endangered language made the Welsh-speaking agenda more pressing. English-language Welsh culture never had that motivation until recently. I think the success of Welsh language film and music has kicked English-language Welsh culture up the arse a bit."

Its response had been distinctive and dynamic. Mel Gibson as Owen Glendower is, mercifully, nowhere to be seen, although Kevin Allen's Twin Town — due out in April — is experiencing the kind of pre-publicity that even the mighty Mel would envy.

THE MOVIE, a supercharged story of murderous revenge in Swansea, re-ignited the copycat violence row last week when it was approved uncut by the British Board of Film Classification. Critics have balked at its amorality — the pot-smoking twins of the title escape unpunished after wreaking retributive carnage — while MPs and campaigners have railed against its "sordid squalor". PolyGram must be jumping for joy.

Evans's House Of America, based on Ed Thomas's award-winning play, is only slightly less discomfiting: it focuses on a brother and sister, consumed by destructive fantasies about Kerouac and the frontier, but hopelessly marooned in a dead-end town in South Wales. It's a more artful, less wilfully provocative effort and it recently won admirers at the Sundance Film Festival.

Both films deal in drugs, deaths, grimness and wicked humour; both spin tunes by the likes of The Prodigy, Super Furry Animals, John Cale and Tom Jones; both debunk the Wales of yore, of lace, daffodils and Harry Secombe. Both, says Evans, "exploit the English-language Welsh vernacular".

Is Wales — home to Newport, an old steel town now known as "the new Seattle" for its prodigious musical output — teetering on the brink of cool? Is the Welsh patois set to become the chic accessory accent of 1997? If so, why now?

The National Lottery has, as elsewhere, been crucial. There is not yet an adequate body in Wales to which film-makers can automatically appeal for resources — like the Scottish Film Production Fund — and English-speakers, of course, don't have S4C to rely on.

The success of Trainspotting, too, has had a galvanising effect. Allen cites it as a direct inspiration. House Of America producer Sheryl Crown perceives that "there is a new movement starting to happen around Britain, allowing the forgotten regions of the country to express themselves". Certainly, the boom isn't confined to Wales. The situation there, however — with its unique interface between language and culture — is distinctive.

"It's terribly tempting to fall into a comparison with Scotland," says Evans, "because they've found confidence slightly ahead of us, but it's a different dynamic because we have the Welsh language, which has been feeding into film-making and TV for years without receiving the same public exposure."

Evans, an S4C and BBC veteran, has not abandoned the Welsh language; he made House Of America in English because it expressed a specifically English-speaking side of the culture. "There are different kinds of films you can make in Welsh. There are films which straddle both languages. When we've really cracked it in terms of cultural confidence, we'll be making bilingual films. You won't have to choose to be on one side of a divide or the other, because there's not really a divide — you're thinking and dealing with both languages on a daily basis.

"I feel proud that Welsh is a culture which succeeds in making films at all," he says. "I couldn't think of any Welsh movie characters until recently. When I was 20, I felt I had two languages, but no culture that was doing anything for me. Now I feel that I can participate in my own culture and contribute towards it. I don't feel that that is an impossible dream."

SHOOTING STARS

Rising: Karen Gomyo

Up . . . Aged seven, Tokyo-born violinist Karen wins a special jury prize in the Montreal I-Musici Competition. She wins the top prize at nine.
Up . . . At 10, she's the youngest student in North America to be selected for a masterclass with Dorothy DeLay. Thereafter, an invitation to study at the Juilliard School of Music in New York.
And Away . . . This week, Gomyo performs on the fiddle in St Andrews, Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, as one of their youngest ever international stars. She's 14.

Falling: Andrew Lloyd Webber

Going . . . In January, Lloyd Webber kicks off an eventful month puritanically, railing against those in the business who "binge on expense accounts". One of those targeted is Rob Dickins, the head of Lloyd Webber's record label. Oops.
Going . . . By February, the deaths of Sunset Boulevard and By Jeeves, two of Andy's West End musicals, are announced. The demise of the theatrical blockbuster is touted.
Gone . . . This week, his latest "sensation", Whistle Down The Wind has its Broadway run postponed indefinitely. Lloyd Webber is forced to admit critics damned the £6m show as "just dull".

After a week of high jinks, London has rival film festivals. **Derek Malcolm**, a former LFF director, calls for a halt to the madness

Two's a crowd

Provocations

ON THE aeroplane going to Berlin, where the first of Europe's three major film festivals was to unveil its myriad wares, representatives of not one but two London film festivals sat (well apart) hoping to discover masterpieces for their programmes.

In one corner, there was Mark Adams of the 40-year-old non-competitive event run by the British Film Institute; in the other, there was Sheila Whitaker, ex-director of that event and now head of the new breakaway version, due to be mounted only a couple of weeks or so before the official event.

Whitaker, who was "retired" from the LFF under protest after 10 years on the job, looked rather happier than Adams, and was entitled to. Because at that point it looked as if the leading sponsors of the LFF had gone over to her side and that the industry wanted what she had to offer: a competitive festival with juries and prizes and an effective film market to boot.

A few hours later, no one was quite so sure. Visa, the leading sponsor, which had gone into an arts event in a great way for the first time last year, had apparently not, after all, made up its mind. The Guardian, another sponsor of the LFF, was also undecided. Everything was up for grabs again. But the favourite must still be the breakaway event whatever big guns the BFI could train on the affair.

It is tempting to call the whole extraordinary story Sheila's Revenge, to cast Glenn Close as Whitaker, Michael Douglas as Wilf Stevenson, head of the BFI, and make a Hollywood film out of the battle. It could be a farce if it did not have elements of high drama and even tragedy about it. There is clearly no love lost between the LFF's former director and the BFI's boss, who asked her to leave earlier than she wanted in order to have a "fresh" look at the event.

But there are other factors to consider. The first is the enormous power wielded even by inexperienced sponsors on artistic events. No doubt Visa did not want that power in such circumstances. After all, it will be difficult to snub the BFI, at the centre of what is left of British film culture, after so fulsomely praising its efforts last year.

On the other hand, sponsors love the publicity engendered by competitions, markets where films are bought and sold, and the enthusiastic support of an industry capable of attracting millions into the cinema.

One thing is certain: there is no room for two London Film Festivals, especially one after the other. One of them has to go. As the director of the London festival from whom Whitaker took over, I have no particular view on who should win this astonishing battle of wills.

But I shall be very angry if an event much admired in the world at large (and indeed copied), which is also increasingly popular with the public, is weakened by the outcome. The London festival is the one great event in the capital that thinks of films and film-makers first and showbiz and profit afterwards. If it is destroyed as a result of this absurd conflict we shall all be the poorer.

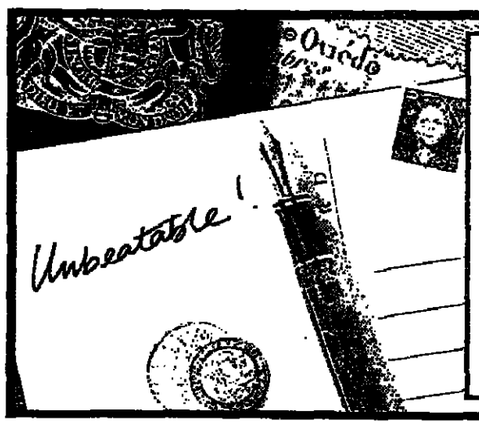
My best guess is that the new will win over the old but will find itself in some trouble living up to its promises, at least at first. True, many industry professionals like the idea of the new festival because it will be mounted just before Mifed, the Milan autumn market, which serves them rather than the public but happens in ghastly preview rooms where nobody wants to spend much time.

But is the other half of the equation, a competitive festival, feasible? There will apparently be two competitions, one for new British films the other for first and second international films. But after Berlin, Cannes and Venice, let alone Edinburgh, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, San Sebastian and Montreal, what kind of quality product is going to be left?

It is already widely felt that three major competitions on the European circuit is one too many to ensure meaningful prizes. Can another possibly be up to scratch? It could eventually, if the breakaway proves an outstanding success. But that would take time.

There is no easy solution, but perhaps there is a difficult one: for the BFI to give up its own event and back the new one with as much enthusiasm as it can muster. But now we come back to Whitaker's Revenge. Could the BFI really contemplate such magnanimity towards the director they got rid of? We must wait and see.

In the meantime, I hope both sides will remember the purpose of festivals is to help independently minded film-makers, who are having a harder and harder time against the Hollywood monolith. Anything less would be unworthy of either of them.



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TRY TO keep your voice down. Some of us are a trifle fragile on Saturday mornings, OK? And even at the best of times we find it hard to comprehend the tricky bits on Open University programmes.

You're sitting there watching soothing pictures of lava floes on Skye, thinking that that fifth Malibu and lemonade hadn't been such a bad idea after all. Television is sometimes a useful hangover cure: a spectacle of nice photography of the natural world that's easy on the eye and gentle with the brain.

But then the presenter chips in with a confusing graphic and something like the following. "At shallower crustal levels these parental basaltic magmas experienced fractional crystallisation to yield a silica undersaturated, netherene normative basalt bemanite association and a silica saturated basalt trachite association." Already with the parental basaltic magmas! Just not so loud, all right?

The Open University's *new* Saturday digest on BBC2 seems specifically designed for such self-abusers who are hard of understanding between eight and 10.30 in the morning. Called *open.saturday* (lower case titles may be grammatically inept but, by thunder, do they ever suggest cunningly marketed grooviness), the show aims to lure non-students into watching some of the OU's broadcasts.

During two and a half hours, thematically linked clips are shown and introduced by a media-friendly presenter. Sometimes there's Brenda Emmanus from the Clothes Show or Howard Stableford from Tomorrow's World. Last Saturday it was David Goldblatt, *who, though he may be an OU* lecturer in social sciences, has all the pleasingly unctuous presenting savvy of Sarah Dunant.

The theme was islands, so we had some very informative clips about islands formed by volcanic eruptions, and the remarkable attempt in Arizona to create a self-subsisting, genetically evolving biosphere. Apparently, goats are so problematic to the ecology of the Galapagos that 15,000 of them had to be shot recently, their carcasses left to rot so that the islands' calcium deficiency can be corrected.

It was *an intriguing theme* which only felt strained when Goldblatt introduced a clip about Siena Cathedral and the battle for Tuscan ascendancy between that city and Florence. Siena may have been a city state in the 13th century, but that is not to say it is an island and so its association with open.saturday's theme seemed bogus.

This morning's theme is globalisation — the shrinking world's trade in goods and ideas. Next Saturday's sounds even better: The Great Imposition considers the language and culture of imperialism.

The danger of open.saturday is that it may offer only spectacle without engaging the grey stuff, or engage it at too low a level for the educational role of the OU to be successful. Like the attempt to market poetry as the new rock'n'roll a couple of years ago, it may distort the subject matter rather than merely make it more palatable.

Maybe, rather, open.saturday, which runs weekly until *September, will* work *like* Classic FM. That radio station at worst may be a disaster: an easy selection of the best bits from the classical canon that reduces great music to aural wallpaper. But it may also encourage listeners who have sampled the music to graduate to Radio 3 or to their local CD library. Similarly, open.saturday could be an entree to more satisfying, demanding, programmes. For those of us who sometimes hanker after self-development from TV rather than Sharron Davies, let's hope it's the latter.

WAVE RIDING
ANNE KARPF

Radio nation

WHY IS there no audio equivalent of Video Nation? Those snatches of personal life — the loss of a child's milk-tooth, a young woman preparing for a night out — captured by the video diary are a radio commonplace, but we rarely hear them unmediated and personally presented. The many programmes purporting to be radio diaries usually owe more to written journals than to verité. And yet radio technology is so small and potentially unobtrusive that it could catch micromoments of experience much more easily than television.

I had high hopes of *Frontline* (Radio 1), for which Tyrell, a black 12-year-old boy who lives in Bristol's St Paul's district, had a DAT tape-recorder strapped to his body for six weeks. The resulting programme mixed together his commentary, recorded scenes, and interviews against a background of music.

You couldn't help but be charmed by Tyrell's worldview — despite having white friends, he disdains white girlfriends as he'd be embarrassed by their clumsy attempts to dance to jungle (never did I think to hear this variant of "black people have rhythm" from a black kid). Tyrell is unfazed by the area's prostitutes and drug-dealers; he worries more about his spots.

But as his articulate mother *talks, it's clear that* the family's prospects are demarcated by living in the ghetto, and it was here that the programme's format failed to deliver. Mostly, instead of hearing Tyrell and his mates' experiences, we heard interviews about prejudice and opportunity with a local resident and a youth leader. Soon the youth leader's upbeat creed began to sound like rhetoric and her championing of music machines as a panacea seemed like wild optimism, as if black unemployment and racism might be solved by everyone becoming DJs. Was it Tyrell's idea to include the interviews? They turned a fresh audio diary into a standard documentary, albeit with lots of music.

There aren't many people with inimitable cadences but *Mae West is one. You only need* to hear the line *They Called Me Snow White but I Drifted* (Radio 2) to hear her voice. Her biographer, Maurice Leonard, presented this profile as if he were hawking some cheap stuff in Petticoat Lane, with cheery but eventually endearing familiarity. It's a good story: the real West, it seems, was monogamous, polite, and gave to church charities. Leonard had fun with the raunchiness, but could have made more of the gender thing: West evidently spoke to an audience that wanted to be teased.

In Flashpoints, Radio 4's new series on scientific changes, an embryologist said, "Here's one we made yesterday," referring not to a lime sorbet but a fertilised egg and sperm. I learned that mice ovulate at midnight — presumably to avoid scientists intent on stealing their eggs. But what started as a useful account of the inception of in vitro fertilisation ended up almost wholly uncritical.

On Wednesday, those football-lovers who don't subscribe to Sky were either having to listen to *Radio 5 Live* or watching *England v Italy in the pub*. Radio 5 is the last British public service broadcaster to carry such key sporting events: while only a minority of the population has Sky (it's growing fast), this is Radio 5's finest hour.

Finally, there's been no mention in the media coverage about Anthony Minghella's Oscar nomination of his radio work — his Two Planks And A Passion mystery plays, Prix Italia-winning Hang Up, and most memorably Cigarettes And Chocolate. The implication that Minghella arrived fully fledged with Truly, Madly, Deeply obliterates radio once again.

'Everything is a lie'

In Shopping And Fucking, Mark Ravenhill made theatre relevant to the Thatcher generation. Now he's put videos and Net-surfing in Faust. And it's no less stunning, says **Lyn Gardner**

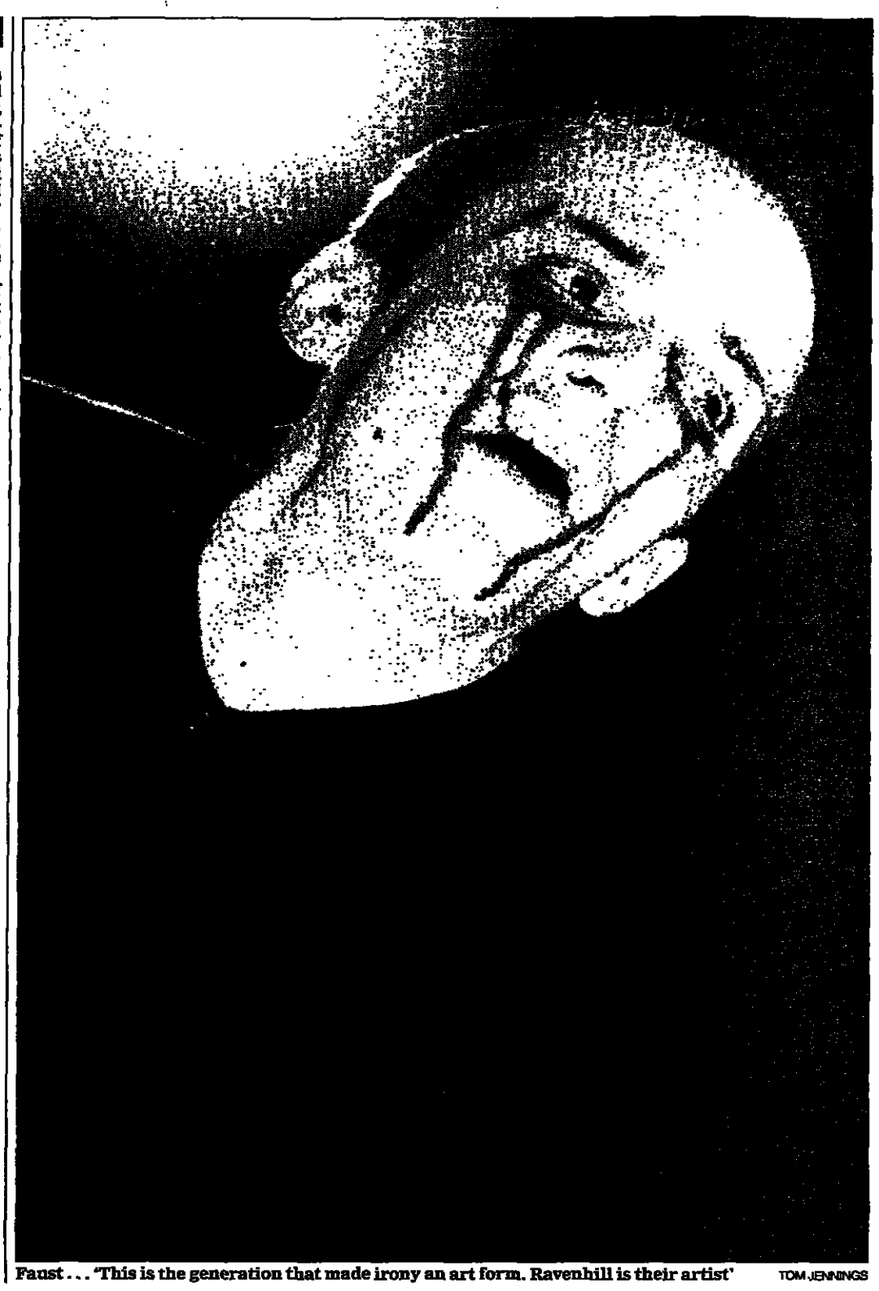
The visionary

MARK Ravenhill's brilliant, brutal and flawed debut play, *Shopping And Fucking*, about a group of sad, young London flat-sharers who saw sex as just another kind of commercial transaction and who found shopping, or rather shoplifting, a sexual turn-on, included scenes of vomiting, buggery, oral sexual intercourse and rimming.

His second, an updating of Faust for the Actors' Touring Company, could be a wee bit tame by comparison. It is not. This story of a Foucault-like professor's descent into hell as he goes on an explicit, thrill-seeking sex-and-violence pleasure spree with a young amoral man as his guide, may be set in the mythic landscape of America's West Coast deserts but it hit no less close to home. After all, *we too are living* through the fag end of history, the point where, as the professor puts it, "reality ended and simulation began". We too have forgotten how to feel all but the most extreme.

What may prove ironic is that whereas the title of Shopping And Fucking unequivocally signalled *that play's area of interest* and scope (there were almost no walk-outs in a provincial tour that included such fashionable towns as Bury St Edmunds and Redhill), Faust's classic status could attract a more traditional theatre audience. "It was not *quite* as I remember the play," a woman declared tartly on leaving Hemel Hempstead's Old Town Hall Arts Centre after Thursday night's performance.

But then plays are not quite what they used to be. In the last two years a generation that seemed to have turned its back on *the theatre play, dismissing* it as marginal, middle-class and mouldy, has suddenly found its voice. Haywards Heath-born and bred Ravenhill, who spent almost eight years working within the theatre before deciding to write, suggests that for a long time language was hijacked by Thatcherism and that words were very political. Only physical theatre offered the possibility of subversion. He may well be right, but what is interesting is that it is Thatcher's babes who are now shouting loudest and longest. At 30, Ravenhill is the crumblie with the *loudhaller* at the head of a mob that includes among many Sarah Kane (Blasted), Jez Butterworth (Mojo), Samuel Adamson (Clocks And Whistles) and Joe Penhall (Pale Horse). All chronicle the disenchantment of a generation whose souls and imaginations have been privatised and who feel conned when they realise as, the young man says in Faust, "everything is a fucking lie: the music, the food, the TV".



Faust . . . 'This is the generation that made irony an art form. Ravenhill is their artist' TOM JENNINGS

Those of us over 40, born at a time when people really still believed that things might actually get better rather than worse, may find that spiritual nihilism as hard to swallow as all the vomit and spent sperm. Although the violence and sex is no more graphic than that in that Tarantino film that we rather admired last year.

Those critics of Shopping And Fucking who marginalised it by suggesting that it showed only misfits on the underbelly of society clearly have not been eavesdropping on the personal and business transactions that happen every night of the week in Soho bars and restaurants. Here many of the *clientele would probably* concur with the drug dealer Brian's statement in Shopping And Fucking that "money is civilisation". Indeed, even plays are now spoken of as product. In Faust the young man repeatedly mutilates himself (and exhibits the pictures on his home page on the Web) so that he can feel something real, but unlike the doomed Donny, the reincarnation of the abused S&M fantasist, Gary, in Ravenhill's previous play, be is no loser: he is off to broker a deal to sell virtual reality to future generations.

The predominantly young audiences that crowded the Court each night of Shopping And Fucking's West End sell-out run saw their own lives reflected up their on the stage no less than the hordes of merchant bankers that besieged Sloane Square 10 years ago when Caryl Churchill's City satire, Serious Money, was playing.

Only, unlike those self-congratulatory bankers, I suspect the present generation got the dark joke of Shopping And Fucking, just as they will instantly recognise the high-tech, video-watching, Net-surfing world of Faust and understand the supreme irony of a world where God is not just dead but the individual is *God*. This is, after all, the generation that has turned irony into both a form of protection and an art form. Ravenhill is their artist. Watch how far he will go.

Faust is at the Old Town Hall in Hemel Hempstead tonight, box-office: 01442 242827. It then tours until May 3. Mark *Ravenhill will be leading a writing* workshop on Faust on February 18 at the Cambridge Drama Centre. Details: 01223 322748.

Off the podium, German conductor Christian Thielemann is an arch-conservative. On it, he's rather good, says **Martin Kettle**

The Right stuff

The controversy

GERMANY'S Christian Thielemann, 37-year-old protégé of Herbert von Karajan, is currently attracting more interest than any conductor of the younger generation working in Europe today. Some of that interest is undoubtedly extra-musical, prompted by interviews in which the Berlin-born conduc*tor has unapologetically identified* himself with the conservative tradition in German culture, with all that that is inevitably deemed to imply. These implications have been given extra spice because Thielemann is currently conducting — to critical acclaim — Hans Pfitzner's arch-conservative opera Palestrina at Covent Garden (though it should be added that he *also returns to* conduct Strauss's violently radical Elektra in a few months' time).

Thielemann . . . conducting Pfitzner's Palestrina at Covent Garden

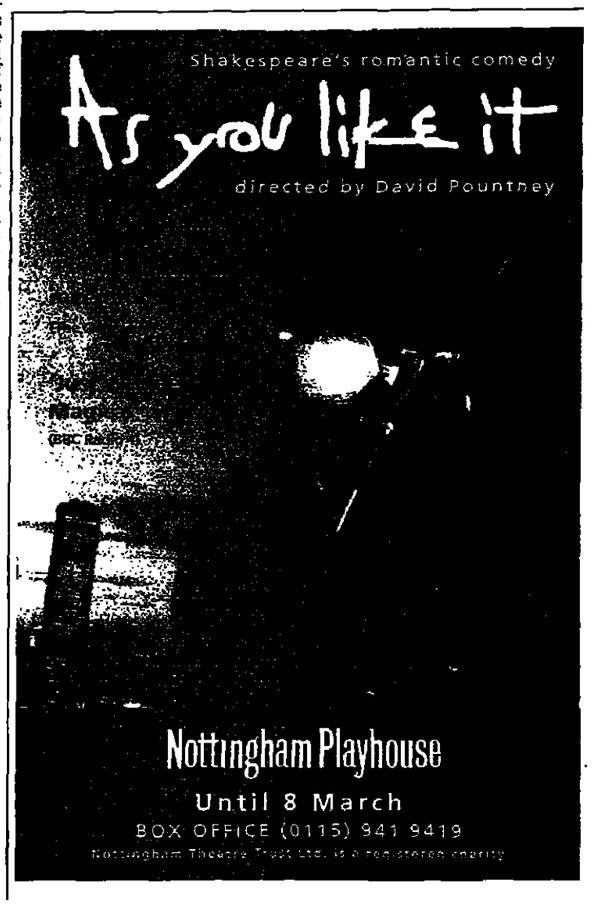
More than usual curiosity is therefore attached to Thielemann's concert hall appearance with the Philharmonia Orchestra this week. Is he, on this evidence, the great German conductor to pick up the baton once held by Bulow, Nikisch, Furtwangler and Karajan? Or is such a notion meaningful any longer, after the violent rupturing of that orchestral tradition by the Third Reich and in a world dominated by increasingly homogenised perfor*mance styles?*

Judging by his work in the Festival Hall, Thielemann is nevertheless a formidable musician in his own right. His conducting style owes little to Karajan. Tall and imposing, with a curious habit of leaning constantly to the left, he uses his physical presence on the podium to great effect, moulding a phrase with big sweeping gestures of the left arm, then crouching, often very low, the hands at shin level, to obtain the required softness of tone. He pays a lot of attention, rightly, to dynamics and it was absolutely clear that he has the personality to make an orchestra play exactly the way that he desires. That grip was reminiscent less of Karajan than, curiously, of Mravinsky.

It is never easy to judge a conductor's personality in a classical concerto, even Beethoven's Emperor, though the authority of his conducting was immediately evident. Lars Vogt's playing of the solo part was less individual and less imposing than Thielemann's accompaniment of it, and though the rapport was evident and illuminating in many passages, especially in the slow movement, one sensed that Thielemann needed a soloist with more command of the big gesture and of Beethoven's grammatic grandeur to achieve true creative sympathy.

The real examination of Thielemann's art came after the interval when he conducted Schumann's Rhenish symphony. Schumann's symphonies remain a problem, and his last (though confusingly numbered third out of the four), is the crux and climax of the difficulty. Schumann wrote it in the period between the public convulsions of the German revolutions *of 1848-9 and the private catastro*phes of his incipient madness of his final years, and it is full of distinctive features — five movements rather than four, its programatic associations with the great national symbol of the Rhine, and its unusual orchestration (five horns and three trombones for the evocation of Cologne cathedral).

Thielemann took an ambitious and high-minded view of the symphony, in which a tremendous attention to detail of phrasing and dynamic was combined with a sweeping overall conception of this high Romantic and, in an important sense, national work. Schumann is a complex composer — his contemporaries often found his music hard to follow — and his symphony yields its secrets and its soul unwillingly. Thielemann's reading succeeded where many have failed. He made a powerful case that this, rather than the more popular first and fourth, is not only Schumann's true symphonic masterpiece, but that it is also one of the crucial achievements of 19th-century German music — a national flowering *which only a bigot without feeling* could resent.



John Lenahan was an obscure magician until he dreamt up a neat scam to conjure up some free publicity, says **Nancy Banks-Smith**

Stuffing gullible bunnies

The trickster

JOHN Lenahan, an American *conjurer, is the host of a new* midnight magic show, Stuff The White Rabbit (BBC2). It's a modest little show — if Granada paid a tenner for the set they should ask for some change — and midnight is not that sought after a slot.

Now watch carefully.

Lenahan was thrown out of The Magic Circle for demonstrating how the three card trick is worked on How Do They Do That? Periodically he returns to shout rude things through their letter box. When Stuff The White Rabbit, whose very title is a rude gesture towards old fashioned magic, was commissioned, he addressed the council of The Magic Circle through an ad in The Stage ("Nyahh, nyahh, nyahh!") and again this week ("Sorry if I'm keeping you awake at night").

"He's a naughty boy," said the president, David Berglas indulgently.

Never was £1,000 more shrewdly invested.

Believing he was about to blow the gaff on sawing women and such, the media were over him like measles.

Lenahan was invited everywhere. Breakfast News, The World At One, Radio 5, Greater London Radio, The Rabbit Keepers' Guide.

As Bob Newhart said when his submarine fired on Palm Beach and the press exploded, it was a slow news day.

He had promised to explain a trick on the show. Last night he *made Concorde* appear ("Aren't you guys glad I use my powers for good?") and showed it to be a model.

Next week two nuclear cooling towers disappear ("Those suckers aren't coming back!") because they are being demolished. These are gags. It's a jokey show.

So is he telling everyone that it's a lot of fuss over nothing. "No," said his agent, who is closely related to George Washington. "Yes," said Lenahan. "I do tell them but they don't seem to listen very well."

One of his favourite magic tricks is instructive. "The most amazing magic Yuri Geller ever did was when Big Ben stopped and he told the papers the next day 'I did that!' And," said Lenehan incredulously, *"they printed it!"*

The Book of the Week

'Buy it now - before you get your call-up papers'

Nicholas Lezard, The Guardian

Kagan has been teaching a course on the Origins of War at Yale for the past 25 years. His new book, *On The Origins of War*, has an almost chilling unity of tone and purpose - he makes ancient history as vivid as recent history, and his insights and observations seem unarguable.

Publisher Price £15 Guardian Price £11 (+£1.99 p&p)
To order *On the Origins of War* from TheGuardian

Post a UK cheque payable to: TheGuardian Interactive, 250 Western Avenue, London, W3 6XZ.
Freephone 0500 600 102
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TheGuardian INTERACTIVE

Rugby League

Top two 'incensed' by record fines

Paul Fitzpatrick

RECORD fines of £15,000 were imposed on St Helens and Wigan Warriors yesterday for the brawl judged to have brought the game into disrepute at Knowsley Road last Saturday.

Super League's leading two clubs must pay half the sum immediately but good behaviour over the next 12 months will spare them the rest. Carlisle and the amateur club Dudley Hill were fined £1,000 each, with £750 suspended, for the two brawls that marred their cup-tie.

In a joint response, Wigan and St Helens "deplored" the severity of the record fine and were "incensed" at the lack of any right of appeal.

They intend to seek legal advice and added: "The clubs produced a showcase match which captivated the nation via BBC TV, the fracas lasting 15 seconds out of 80 minutes of top-class entertainment."

True, but there will still be plenty of support for the RFL's tough stance. As the first live televised game of the year it was essential that it struck the right note for what is a crucial season for the game. The authorities had shown their intent on Thurday with the eight-match ban imposed on Saints' captain Bobbie Goulding, whose dismissal sparked the brawl.

The three-man sub-committee which judged the affair studied the referee's report and video evidence, and heard representations from both clubs. It concluded that "both sides displayed considerable lack of discipline which ... caused considerable hurt to the game."

The punishments are the biggest since Leeds were fined £8,000 and £12,000, with half suspended, for fielding weakened sides in the run-up to the Wembley final of 1994.

In the other case, Carlisle and Dudley Hill were made to pay £250 immediately. But whereas Carlisle only have to avoid trouble until the end of the season to avoid paying the other £750, Dudley Hill's fine will be hanging over them until the end of 1999, reflecting the fact that they had three men sent off.

The Batley full-back Steve Walker drew a six-match suspension for the high tackle that had him sent off in last Sunday's cup defeat by Paris, whose forward Adam Peters was banned for one match after being placed on report for foul play.

Meanwhile, Wigan said they have lined up an unnamed "world class" centre to replace Va'aiga Tuigamala if the Western Samoan returns to rugby union with Newcastle, though they hope he will stay at Central Park.

● Halifax Bluesox have signed the 18-year-old St Estève forward Jerome Guisset, who represented France in the recent World Nines. The second-row, who spent last season in Australia with Canberra Raiders' Under-19s, is expected to arrive at Thrum Hall in late March, teaming up with his compatriot Eric Anselme.

Athletics

Walk-out threat by chief coach

Duncan Mackay

MALCOLM ARNOLD, the nation's chief coach, has threatened to join the exodus from British athletics after being told that more than £4 million of National Lottery funding could be withheld unless the troubled sport gets its house in order.

Sir Rodney Walker, the chairman of the English Sports Council, has warned the British Athletic Federation that it faces "having the tap turned off" because of its problems.

Already this year Peter Radford has resigned as BAF's executive chairman, Steve Gledhill has quit as its financial director and Tony Ward been sacked as the press officer as internal bickering threatens to tear the sport apart.

Throughout the turmoil Arnold has continued to prepare an application for Lottery funding, saying it was "one of the most important things ever to have happened" to athletics. Only two weeks ago he was confidently predicting that the BAF's problems would not affect the bid.

All that changed with Walker's warning. "I'm getting to the stage where I have had enough," said Arnold, who replaced Frank Dick three years ago after he quit in a row over funding. "Unless something is done soon, from the sport and the Sports Council, there will be another departure from athletics.

"We have superb athletes and coaches. That side of the sport is no problem for me and one I want to continue working with.

"But there are people trying to tie our hands and feet. I wonder sometimes if they want athletics to be prosperous and successful. If they have the trust in me and other people with integrity in the sport, it is time to stop the posturing."

Arnold, who is due to meet Sports Council officials on Monday to discuss the application, submitted a plan last month that included a proposal for more coaches, a lifestyle management scheme and increased medical support. But one insider described it as "something like you draw up for Father Christmas".

Walker, speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live's Inside Edge programme, said: "We are watching the developments in athletics. We shall certainly look to work with and encourage the BAF to come through their difficulties. But clearly we must reserve the right as custodians of public money to turn off the tap."

Walker, however, reassured athletes that the £1.5 million due to them directly was safe.

Arnold's star pupil Colin Jackson faces the biggest test of his winter tomorrow when he meets the Olympic champion Allen Johnson in Liévin, France, over the 60 metres hurdles.

Hockey

Loughtonians keep cool in Cologne

Pat Rowley

OLD Loughtonians put aside their indifferent form at the English Indoor Championships last week to win their first two matches in the European Indoor Championships in Cologne yesterday.

They beat the 1994 finalists Valdeluz of Spain 5-3 and Vienna AC, last year's bronze medallists, 7-5 to qualify for a semi-final, probably against the favourites Harvestehuder Hamburg. An English club has never won a medal in this event.

Chris Bloor and Chris Gladman put them 2-0 ahead against Valdeluz and they stayed ahead despite missing Nick Thompson and Jason Lee, their Olympic forwards, and failing to score from 10 corners. Bloor and Gladman scored again and David Ralph converted a stroke.

Against Vienna they found themselves 2-0 down early but levelled by half-time. Bloor's fourth goal of the day gave them the lead and they clung to it tenaciously.

● Suffolk, women's county champions two years ago and runners-up last season, have withdrawn from the event, the zonal rounds of which take place this weekend. Their Ipswich players are English Cup-holders and are being rested for the European Cup-winners' Cup at Easter. Other Suffolk players have refused to replace them at short notice.

This weekend England women play Wales, the Dutch club MOP and England Under-21 during training at Milton Keynes.

Star quality . . . Gough answered the call when Atherton put New Zealand in ROSS SETFORD

Cricket

Straining to prove the captain right

Paul Allott in Christchurch on the extra burden placed on the heavy artillery

RARELY can there have been a Test series where it has proved so effective to ask the opposition to bat first. It takes a strong-willed captain with almost suicidal tendencies to take such a gamble but in New Zealand it seems to work.

The irony is that on the one pitch that proved a definite "insertion job", at Wellington, New Zealand's Lee Germon chose, quite wrongly, to bat first.

Mike Atherton, short of confidence after the Zimbabwe fiasco, won the toss at Auckland and again yesterday in Christchurch and twice he has chosen to bowl first.

That may seem curious to those who believe that, if you win the toss, you should bat first nine times out of 10 — and think about bowling on the 10th but then bat anyway. But in New Zealand no lesser scholars of the game than Glenn Turner and Jeremy Coney, both past Test captains, feel that bowling first is a justifiable option more often than not.

This is chiefly because all New Zealand wickets begin with a good covering of grass, are slightly damp and never break up as the game wears on. Consequently a team's best chance of taking wickets is early in the game. That rule, of course, does not necessarily apply everywhere in the world.

England's bowling in the first Test at Eden Park was not only poor but had the effect of almost betraying their captain and his confidence in them. By choosing four seamers and asking them to bowl on a damp, green pitch, Atherton delivered the perfect gift to his team and at Auckland they tossed it away.

How different matters were at Wellington, where England had no such burden of expectation. New Zealand chose to bat first and England for the first time for ages had a balanced attack of three seamers and two spinners.

The quicker bowlers now delivered and routed New Zealand for 124 in the first innings. With capable batting and a thoroughly professional second-innings bowling and fielding performance the Test was then won. England's morale was restored and they had found a winning combination of bowlers.

Darren Gough has been the star, always willing, ever cheerful and now bowling with the pace and fire he first showed in Australia two years ago. He may not be a model of accuracy but he has an explosiveness that his captain admires.

Steadiness around him is a must and curiously the two bowlers in the squad most capable of providing that have had to fight for their places this winter. Andy Caddick proved in Wellington what a fine, aggressive, line-and-length seamer he is. In Christchurch he was steady without being as incisive as in the previous Test.

Robert Croft has been a revelation, displaying all the arts of spin bowling — turn, obviously, but more important on the green and non-turning Christchurch pitch, the flight and guile which made him England's most effective bowler, and all on a seamer's day.

Dominic Cork has been a disappointment. He seems quite at odds with himself, uneasy in his run-up and delivery and lacking consistent line and length, so much so that he was fortunate to be given the second new ball yesterday.

Expectation was high at Lancaster Park after Wellington, where the bowling had come good through evolution, a little luck and sound selection. This time the bowlers did not throw away the advantage but neither did they capitalise to the full. This England attack will come good but only when they learn to put the pressure on the opposition batsmen and not on themselves.

Golf

Frost and Wade strike before the lightning

BOLTS of lightning played afternoon havoc at Sun City, by which time the South African David Frost and John Wade of Australia were safely back in the clubhouse sharing a two-stroke lead in the Dimension Data Pro-Am.

Play was finally halted because of bad light with half the 160-strong field still to complete their second rounds. Among the top names on the leaderboard are the Zimbabweans Nick Price and Tony Johnstone, who are both six under. Price had completed nine holes, Johnstone six.

Denmark's Tomas Bjorn was alone in third place chasing Frost and Wade at nine under after nine holes. One stroke further behind was Ireland's Padraig Harrington who went round Lost City in 66.

England's Iain Pyman is joint fourth on 137 after an eagle at the last for a 67.

● Jose Maria Olazabal has asked his manager Sergio Gomez to arrange a visa for Dubai but has still to make a decision on a comeback at the Desert Classic there in two weeks' time.

The Spaniard has not played a tournament since September 1995 because of rheumatoid arthritis in both feet. "But it is a question of when he returns, not if," said Gomez. "You don't even notice any limp now."

Woods fails to deliver the goods

LUCAS PARSONS and Peter O'Malley easily upstaged Tiger Woods to move four shots ahead of the pack after the second round of the Australian Masters in Melbourne yesterday.

The two Australians were both at 15 under par with two-round totals of 131. Woods, though, could only add a lack-lustre 70 to his first round score of 68 to fall seven shots behind the leaders.

The Wales international David Park, meanwhile, began what he hopes will be a Walker Cup year for him by winning the Strokesaver La Manga Masters by one stroke from Gary Wolstenholme and Brett Taylor in Spain.

Nigel Mansell, the former Formula One world champion who could be a regular on the amateur circuit this season, finished 27 shots behind with a final round 77.

Weekend fixtures

(3.0 unless stated)
(a-t = all-ticket)

Soccer

FA CUP
Fourth round
Blackburn v Coventry

Fifth round
Birmingham v Wrexham
Chesterfield v Nottm Forest sold out
Leeds v Portsmouth
Man C v Middlesbrough
Wimbledon v QPR
Tomorrow
Bradford C v Sheff Wed (1.30, a-t)
Leicester v Chelsea (4.10, a-t)

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Derby v West Ham
Tottenham v Arsenal

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Barrow v Guiseley; Bishop Auckland v Chorley, Blyth Spartans v Runcorn; Emley v Bamber Bridge; Gainsborough v Witton Alb. Hyde Utd v Accrington Stanley; Knowsley v Boston Utd, Leek Tn v Frickley; Marine v Buxton, Spennymoor v Alfreton Tn; Winsford Utd v Lancaster. **First Division:** Atherton LR v Flixton; Congleton Tn v Whitley Bay, Gurzon Ashton v Matlock Tn, Droylsden v Leigh; Eastwood Tn v Lincoln Utd, Farsley Celtic v Gretna; Gt Harwood Tn v Bradford PA; Harrogate Tn v Warrington Tn, Netherfield v Stocksbridge PS, Radcliffe Bor v Workington; Worksop Tn v Ashton Utd.

ICIS LEAGUE: First Division: Billericay Tn v Maidenhead Utd; Bognor Regis Tn v Walton & Hersham, Canvey Island v Marlow; Chesham Utd v Abingdon Tn; Leyton Pennant v Barton Rvrs; Molesey v Berkhamsted Tn; Thame Utd v Worthing; Tooting & Mitcham Utd v Basingstoke Tn; Uxbridge v Hampton; Whyteleafe v Aldershot Tn; Wokingham Tn v Croydon. **Second Division:** Bedford Tn v Banstead Ath; Bracknell Tn v Hungerford Tn; Collier Row & Romford v Windsor & Eton; Dorking v Barking; Edgware Tn v Chalfont St Peter; Egham Tn v Horsham, Leighton Tn v Cheshunt, Met Police v Tilbury; Ware v Leatherhead; Wembley v Wivenhoe Tn; Witham Tn v Hemel Hempstead. **Third Division:** Camberley Tn v Wingate & Finchley; Clapton v Kingsbury Tn. East Thurrock Utd v Wealdstone. Flackwell Hth v Lewes; Harlow Tn v Hornchurch; Hertford Tn v Aveley, Southall v Northwood.

N-W COUNTIES LEAGUE: First Division: Atherton Collieries v Salford C; Burscough v Glossop NE; Darwen v Bootle; Eastwood Hanley v Chadderton; Holker OB v Blackpool Rvrs; Mossley v Kidsgrove Ath. Penrith v St Helens Tn; Prescot Cables v Clitheroe; Rossendale Utd v Nantwich Tn; Trafford v Newcastle Tn; Vauxhall GM v Maine Road.

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE: First Division: Chester Le Street v Bedlington Terriers; Consett v Billingham Syn; Dunston Federation v Easington; Durham C v South Shields; RTM Newcastle v Crook Tn; Seaham RS v Guisborough Tn. Tow Law Tn v Stockton; West Auckland v Whickham; Whitby Tn v Morpeth Tn.

PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Liverpool v Tranmere.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE
First Division
Bolton v Sheff Utd
Charlton v Barnsley
Grimsby v Huddersfield
Norwich v West Brom
Oxford Utd v Oldham
Port Vale v Ipswich
Southend v Stoke
Wolverhampton v C Palace

Second Division
Bournemouth v Burnley
Bristol Rvrs v Luton
Crewe v Walsall
Millwall v Rotherham
Notts Co v Blackpool
Peterborough v Bristol C
Plymouth v Bury
Preston v Wycombe
Stockport v Shrewsbury
York v Gillingham

Third Division
Carlisle v Brighton
Darlington v Scunthorpe
Doncaster v Barnet
Fulham v Wigan
Hartlepool v Torquay
Hull v Exeter
L Orient v Cambridge Utd
Mansfield v Lincoln
Rochdale v Northampton
Swansea v Scarborough
Tomorrow
Hereford v Cardiff (12.15)

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Ashford Tn v Gresley Rvrs; Burton Alb v Gravesend & N; Cheltenham v Chelmsford; Crawley Tn v Nuneaton; Dorchester v Kings Lynn; Gloucester C v Hastings; Halesowen v Baldock Tn; Merthyr v Sudbury Tn; Newport AFC v Cambridge C; Salisbury v Atherstone; Sittingbourne v Worcester C. **Midland Division:** Bilston Tn v Redditch Utd; Corby Tn v Stafford Rngrs; Evesham Utd v Bedworth Utd; Grantham Tn v RC Warwick; Raunds Tn v Dudley Tn; Rothwell Tn v Moor Green; Solihull Bor v Hinckley Tn; Stourbridge v Shepshed Dynamo; Sutton Coldfield Tn v Tamworth; VS Rugby v Ilkeston Tn. **Southern Division:** Bashley v Cirencester Tn; Fareham Tn v Tonbridge Angels; Forest Green v Erith & Belvedere; Havant Tn v Cinderford Tn; St Leonards v Fleet Tn; Trowbridge Tn v Fisher Ath London; Waterlooville v Yate Tn; Weston-S-Mare v Newport (IoW); Weymouth v Dartford; Witney Tn v Margate.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier Division: Armthorpe Welf v Hallam; Belper Tn v Ossett Tn; Hucknall Tn v Glasshoughton Welf; Liversedge v Ashfield Utd; North Ferriby Utd v Denaby Utd; Ossett Alb v Brigg Tn; Pontefract Cols v Maltby MW; Selby Tn v Arnold Tn; Sheffield v Pickering Tn; Thackley v Hatfield Main.

S-E COUNTIES LEAGUE (11.0 unless stated): **First Division:** Cambridge Utd v Norwich C; Chelsea v West Ham; Gillingham v Ipswich; Millwall v Arsenal; QPR v L Orient (10.45); Tottenham v Charlton Ath. **Postponed:** Portsmouth v Southend Utd. **Second Division:** Barnet v Bristol Rvrs; C Palace v Tottenham; Oxford Utd v Luton Tn; Swindon v Southampton; Wimbledon v Colchester Utd; Wycombe v Reading. **Postponed:** Bournemouth v Bristol C.

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP
Fourth round
Brechin v Raith
Clyde v Kilmarnock
Falkirk v Dunfermline
Gr Morton v Dundee
Motherwell v Hamilton
Rangers v East Fife
Tomorrow
Hearts v Dundee Utd (3.15)

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
First Division
Clydebank v St Mirren

Second Division
Berwick v Queen of South
Stenhousemuir v Ayr

Third Division
Albion v Inverness CT
Cowdenbeath v Queen's Pk
East Stirling v Forfar
Montrose v Arbroath
Ross County v Alloa

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Barnstaple Tn v Bristol MF; Bridgwater Tn v Westbury Utd; Bridport v Calne Tn; Brislington v Bideford Tn; Chippenham Tn v Tiverton Tn; Mangotsfield Utd v Elmore; Taunton Tn v Paulton Rvrs; Torrington v Backwell Utd.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth v Conwy; Barry Tn v Welshpool; Briton Ferry v Bangor C; Cemaes Bay v Caersws; Cwmbran v Connah's Quay; Flint Tn v Ton Pentre; Llansantffraid v Inter Cable-Tel; Newtown v Holywell (2.30); Rhyl v Carmarthen Tn. **Tomorrow:** Ebbw Vale v Porthmadog.

IRISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Cliftonville v Ards; Coleraine v Crusaders; Glentoran v Linfield; Portadown v Glenavon. **First Division:** Ballyclare v Carrick; Bangor v Newry. Distillery v Larne; Omagh Tn v Ballymena.

FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Finn Harps v Derry C (7.30); Home Farm Everton v Bray Wndrs (7.30); Sligo Rvrs v UCD (7.30).

Tomorrow
FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National Div: Croydon v Wembley (2.0).

Basketball

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Manchester v London (7.30); Newcastle v Sheffield (7.30); Hemel & Watford v Leicester (7.30); Thames Valley v Chester (8.0); Worthing v Crystal Palace (8.0). **Tomorrow:** Chester v Birmingham (6.0); Crystal Palace v Manchester (5.0); Leicester v Leopards (7.0).

Ice Hockey

SUPERLEAGUE: Ayr v Cardiff (6.40); Bracknell v Basingstoke (6.0); Nottingham v Manchester (7.0); Sheffield v Newcastle (7.0). **Tomorrow:** Basingstoke v Nottingham (6.30); Manchester v Bracknell (6.0); Newcastle v Cardiff (6.30).

PREMIER LEAGUE: Kingston v Medway (6.30); Slough v Solihull (6.30); Telford v Swindon (7.30). **Tomorrow:** Guildford v Slough (6.0); Medway v Solihull (5.15); Peterborough v Swindon (5.30).

NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE: Castlereagh v Murrayfield (6.0); Dumfries v Paisley (7.30); Fife v Whitley (7.15). **Tomorrow:** Murrayfield v Blackburn (6.30); Paisley v Fife (6.30); Whitley v Dumfries (6.30).

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE
Dover v Bromsgrove
Farnborough v Stalybridge
Gateshead v Hednesford
Halifax v Bath
Kidderminster v Altrincham
Macclesfield v Rushden & D'monds
Morecambe v Welling
Slough v Northwich
Stevenage v Kettering
Telford v Hayes
Not on coupons: Woking v Southport.

Rugby Union

FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP: France v Wales (2.0, Parc des Princes); Ireland v England (Lansdowne Rd).

COURAGE CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP: League Three: Exeter v Leeds (1.30); Harrogate v Walsall (2.15); Havant v Fylde (1.0); Liverpool St Helens v Clifton (2.30); Otley v Morley (2.15); Reading v Redruth (1.30); Rosslyn Pk v Lydney (2.30); Wharfedale v Ldn Welsh (2.15). **League Four North:** Birmingham/Solihull v Manchester (2.30); Kendal v Worcester (2.30); Lichfield v Stoke-on-Trent (2.30); Preston G v Nuneaton; Sandal v Sheffield (2.15); Stourbridge v Hereford (2.30); Winnington Pk v Aspatria (2.30). **South:** Berry Hill v High Wycombe (2.30); Charlton Pk v N Walsham (2.30); Cheltenham v Tabard (2.30); Met Police v Plymouth; Newbury v Barking; Weston-S-Mare v Camberley. **Tomorrow:** Henley v Askeans (2.30).

SRU TENNENTS CHAMPIONSHIP: Premier League: First Division: Currie v Hawick; Jed-Forest v Boroughmuir; Melrose v Heriots' FP; Watsonians v Stirling County. **Second Division:** Edinburgh Acads v Glasgow Acads; GHK v Biggar; Gala v West of Scotland; Kelso v Dundee HSFP. **Third Division:** Kilmarnock v Glasgow Southern; Musselburgh v Selkirk; Peebles v Kirkcaldy; Stewarts Mel FP v Preston Lodge. **Fourth Division:** Glenrothes v Grangemouth; Haddington v Gordonians; Hillhead/Jordanhill v Ayr; Langholm v Corstorphine.

ANGLO-WELSH SECOND DIVISION COMPETITION: Group A: Blackheath v Cross Keys (1.0); Waterloo v Pontypool (2.15). **Group B:** Coventry v Blackwood (12.0). **Group C:** Aberavon v Nottingham (2.30). **Group D:** Ldn Scottish v Bonymaen; Rotherham v Llandovery (2.15); Ystradgynlais v Rugby (2.30).

Rugby League

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE (2.30): **Premier Division:** Beverley v Dudley Hill; Egremont v Oldham St Annes; Mayfield v Leigh Miners; Saddleworth v Woolston; West Hull v Heworth; Wigan St Patricks v Lock Lane. **First Division:** East Leeds v Blackbrook; Eastmoor v Askam; Leigh East v Thornhill; Millom v Barrow Island; Moldgreen v Oulton; Walney Central v Wigan St Judes. **Second Division:** Eccles v York Acorn; New Earswick v Featherstone Amateur; Ovenden v Milford; Redhill v Dewsbury Moor; Shaw Cross v Normanton; Skirlaugh v Hull Dockers.

Tomorrow
SILK CUT PLATE: First round: Bramley v Rochdale; Hull KR v Doncaster; Hunslet v Huddersfield/Hull (3.30); Lancashire Lynx v Barrow; Leigh v Swinton; Whitehaven v Batley; Widnes v York (2.30); Workington v Dudley Hill.

ICIS LEAGUE
Premier Division
Enfield v Chertsey Tn
Harrow Bor v Hitchin
Heybridge v Dulwich
Staines v Dag & Red
Sutton Utd v St Albans
Yeading v Bromley
Yeovil v Kingstonian
Not on coupons Aylesbury v Grays; Bishop's Stortford v Hendon; Boreham Wood v Carshalton; Purfleet v Oxford C.

Hockey

MEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUES: East: Chelmsford v Dereham; Colchester v B Stortford; Ipswich v Cambs Univ; Peterboro v Cambs C; Redbridge v Sudbury. **Midlands:** Hampton v Blossomfield; Harborne v Coventry; N Notts v Khalsa; Nottingham v Lough Stdts; Olton v Bloxwich. **North:** Chester v Ben Rhydding; Norton v Neston; Ramgarhia v Harrogate; S Bankers v Springfields; Southport v Swalwell; Timperley v Formby. **Tomorrow:** Norton v Timperley. **South:** Anchorians v Beckenham; Chichester v Tun Wells; Gore Ct v Fareham; H Wycombe v Ramgarhia; Maidenhead v Wimbledon; O Kings v Richmond; O Whits v Winchester; Spencer v Hampstead; Woking v Ashford; Wokingham v Bournemouth. **West:** Bath Bucs v Swansea; Bristol Univ v Whitchurch; Clevedon v T Vale; Llan & Llan v Plymouth; WSM v Robinsons.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE (The Stadium, Milton Keynes): England XI v England U-21 (2.30); England XI v Wales (4.30). **Tomorrow:** England XI v Wales (11.0); England XI v MOP (Neths) (2.0).

WOMEN'S COUNTY C'SHIP: Midlands (11.15, Bedford LC): **Tomorrow:** Leics v Northants; Derby v Staffs; Northants v Staffs; Derbys v Warws. **North** (9.30, Altrincham): Man Lge v LCL; Lancs v Cheshire; LCL v Shef Lge; Cumbria v Man Lge. **Tomorrow:** Lancs v LCL; Man Lge v Cheshire; Cumbria v Shef Lge; Man Lge v Lancs; LCL v Cumbria; Cheshire v Shef Lge. **North** (10.30, Morpeth): Northumberland v Durham; Yorks v Humberside. **Tomorrow** (9.0): Durham v Yorks; N'land v Humberside; Durham v Humberside; Yorks v N'land. **South** (10.30, Milton Keynes): Middx v Oxon; Berks v Kent; Sussex v Surrey; Middx v Kent; Berks v Sussex; Surrey v Oxon.

WOMEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUES: West: Bournemouth v Cheltenham; Colwall v Redland; Wimborne v St Austell; Yate v Leominster.

WOMEN'S CLUBS: Aldridge v Chester (1.30); Bracknell v Exmouth; Chelmsford v Ealing (1.15); Clifton v Cardiff A; Hampton v Rover Cowley; Liverpool v Crosby; Newport v St Fagans; O Loughtonians v Canterbury (2.30); Tulse Hill v Sevenoaks; W Witney v Reading (12.0); Winnington Pk v Colwyn B.

Tomorrow
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier: Barford T v Reading (1.0, Holyhead LC); Canterbury v Southgate (1.0); Havant v E Grinstead (2.15); Hounslow v Cannock (2.0, Dukes Meadows); Teddington v Guildford (12.0, Dukes Meadows). **First:** Beeston v Doncaster (2.0, Highfields); Blueharts v Crostyx (2.0); Bournville v C Portsmouth (2.30); Bromley v Brooklands (1.0); Hull v St Albans (2.0); Indian Gym v Edgbaston (2.30); Isca v Firebrands (1.30); Lewes v Glos C (1.30); Oxford Hawks v Harleston (2.0); Oxford Univ v Warrington (2.0); Sheffield v Trojans (2.0).

Results

Soccer

AFRICAN SUPER CUP (Cairo): Zamalek 0, Arab Contractors 0 (aet; Arab Contractors won 4-2 on pens).

AFRICAN CUP WINNERS' CUP (Kampala): **Preliminary round, second leg:** Umeme SC 3, Awassa Flour Mill 0 (agg: 5-0).

Rugby Union

A INTERNATIONALS: France 41, Emerging Wales 6; Ireland 30, England 44.

U-21 INTERNATIONALS: France 51, Wales 20; Ireland 28, England 27.

ANGLO-WELSH: Second Division Competition: Group A: Postponed: Maesteg v Richmond.

CLUB MATCH: Cancelled: Newport v Gloucester.

Golf

DIMENSION DATA PRO-AM (Sun City, SA): **Second round** (SA unless stated): **134** J Wade (Aus) 69, 65; D Frost 69, 65. **136** P Harrington (Ire) 70, 66. **137** M McNulty (Zim) 71, 66; I Pyman (Eng) 70, 67. **138** G van der Nest 67, 71; W Westner 72, 66; S Ames (Trin) 69, 69; C Williams (Eng) 69, 69; R McCann (US) 65, 73. **139** L Westwood (Eng) 70, 69; K Tomori (Japan) 71, 68; D Chopra (Swe) 72, 67; C Rocca 67, 72. **140** A Binaghi (It) 71, 69; A McLean (Eng) 70, 70; H Baiocchi 72, 68. **141** T Dodds (Nam) 69, 72; C Davison 74, 67; R Stewart 71, 70; S Scahill (NZ) 74, 67. **142** M Gortana 70, 72; M Campbell (NZ) 73, 69; W Druian 71, 71; M Jonzon (Swe) 72, 70; I Garrido (Sp) 70, 72; B May (US) 71, 71. **143** B Ott (US) 72, 71; D Gammon 68, 75; A Sherborne (Eng) 74, 69; B Vaughan (US) 72, 71; C Swart 73, 70; F Andersson (Swe) 72, 71. **144** J Lomas (Eng) 70, 74; J Hawkes 71, 73; G Emerson (Eng) 73, 71; J Bickerton (Eng) 73, 71; M Anglert (Swe) 71, 73; R Wessels 73, 71; D Terblanche 72, 72; P Baker (Eng) 73, 71. **145** J Mellor (Eng) 73, 72; A Cruse 72, 73; A Canete (Arg) 67, 78; A P Botes 71, 74; K Vainola (Fin) 73, 72; J McHenry (Ire) 74, 71; N Briggs (Eng) 71, 74; R Burns (NI) 75, 70; S Woods (US) 73, 72; S van der Merwe (Nam) 75, 70; D Clarke (Ire) 77, 68; C Whitelaw 75, 70. **146** S Bottomley (Eng) 77, 69; M Hallberg (Swe) 74, 72; T Webber 74, 72. **147** B Vaughan 75, 72; P Haugerud (Nor) 77, 70; N Haart 69, 78; G Garbero (US) 72, 75; D Carter (Eng) 74, 73. **148** M Board (US) 75, 73; A Beal (Eng) 76, 72; K Eriksson (Swe) 76, 72; S Hendley (US) 75, 73; I Hutchings 75, 73; J Hobday 74, 74. **149** D Higgins (Ire) 73, 76; D James 76, 73; M Dorrma 75, 74; M Archer (Eng) 71, 78. **150** A Hunter (Scot) 73, 77; M Foster (Eng) 74, 76. **151** N Fasth (Swe) 73, 78; H Walters 74, 77. **152** P Price (Wales) 72, 80. **153** M du Toit 78, 75. **156** P Moore (US) 81, 75. **158** N Gandy 79, 79. **163** J Nelson 82, 81. **Withdrawn:** G Levenson. **80 players to complete their second round today after play was halted by lightning.**

AUSTRALIAN MASTERS (Melbourne): **Second-round leaders** (Aus unless stated): **131** P O'Malley 65, 66; L Parsons 64, 67. **135** R Gibson (Can) 67, 68; S Tait 68, 67. **136** R Allenby 70, 66. **137** W Grady 70, 67; P Senior 69, 68; R Davis 72, 65. **138** P Lonard 69, 69; T Woods 68, 70 (US); L Mize (US) 68, 70. **139** D Ecob 71, 68; M Weir (Can) 67, 72; D Diaz 72, 67. **140** L Wastie 71, 69; P Chapman 73, 67; D Dunakey (US) 68, 72; S Owen (NZ) 68, 72. **141** G Coles 70, 71; B Partridge 70, 71; K Druce 70, 71; S Robinson 69, 72; G Chalmers 72, 69. **142** B Jackson (GB) 73, 69; S Lyndsay 73, 69; S Laycock 73, 69; M Allen 72, 70; R Swanson 72, 70; S Bouvier 68, 74; S Alker (NZ) 72, 70; G Kenny 71, 71; S Mori (Japan) 71, 71.

UNITED HAWAIIAN OPEN (Honolulu): **First-round leaders** (US unless stated): **62** M Reid; B Claar. **63** P Jordan. **64** E Dougherty; L Mattiace. **65** T Lehman; K Gibson; J Thorpe; S Simpson; D Waldorf. **66** T Herron; J Edwards; J Green. **67** T Byrum; P Azinger; J Daly; D Pooley; D Barron; J Dowdall; D Barr (Can); J Hart; S Appleby (Aus); J P Hayes.

LA MANGA MASTERS (Spain): **Final scores: 280** D Park (Burghill Valley) 68, 71, 68, 73. **281** G Wolstenholme (Kilworth Springs) 73, 70, 70, 68; B Taylor (Thorpe Hall) 71, 69, 71, 70. **282** L Donald (Beaconsfield) 72, 70, 68, 72. **289** R Finch (Hull) 73, 70, 73, 73. **291** R Latham (Porters Pk) 74, 73, 72, 72. **Also: 307** N Mansell (Woodbury Pk) 79, 72, 79, 77.

Tennis

DUBAI MEN'S OPEN: Quarter-finals: J Novak (Cz) bt R Krajicek (Neth) 6-2, 6-2; J Courier (US) bt W Ferreira (SA) 6-2, 7-5; G Ivanisevic (Croatia) bt B Becker (Ger) w/o; T Muster (Aut) bt C Ruud (Nor) 6-4, 6-7, 7-5.

MARSEILLE OPEN: Third round: F Santoro (Fr) bt M Rosset (Switz) 3-6, 6-3, 7-5; T Enqvist (Swe) bt H Dreekmann (Ger) 6-4, 3-6, 6-1; S Bruguera (Sp) bt A Chesnokov (Rus) 6-3, 6-2.

SAN JOSE OPEN (California): **Second round:** G Rusedski (GB) bt D Nestor (Can) 6-3, 6-1; C Woodruff (US) bt B Steven (NZ) 6-3, 4-6, 6-3; G Doyle (Aus) bt J Tarango (US) 6-4, 7-5; R Reneberg (US) bt J Stark (US) 3-6, 6-4, 7-6; M Chang (US) bt S Sargsian (Armenia) 6-3, 6-4; A Agassi (US) bt M Norman (Swe) 4-6, 7-6, 6-3; T Martin (US) bt J Grabb (US) 6-3, 7-5.

LTA MEN'S SATELLITE (Chigwell): **Quarter-finals:** J Delgado (GB) bt L Milligan (GB) 6-1, 6-1; A Richardson (GB) bt T Spinks (GB) 6-2, 7-5; D van Uffelen (Bel) bt V Liukko (Fin) 6-3, 6-4; C Pressley (US) bt M Stadling (Swe) 7-6, 7-6.

PARIS WOMEN'S OPEN: Quarter-finals: I Majoli (Cro) bt Y Basuki (Indo) 7-6, 3-6, 6-3; J Novotna (Cz) bt M Pierce (Fr) 6-1, 6-2; A Huber (Ger) bt I Spirlea (Rom) 6-4, 6-2; M Hingis (Switz) bt N Tauziat (Fr) 6-3, 6-2.

LTA WOMEN'S SATELLITE (Birmingham): **Semi-finals:** S Siddall (GB) bt L Ahl (GB) 7-6, 6-2; C Taylor (GB) bt T Poutchek (Belarus) 6-1, 6-1.

Basketball

NBA: Miami 105, Indiana 96; New York 107, Philadelphia 92; Dallas 99, Golden State 107; Denver 117, LA Lakers 132; Utah 110, Portland 96; Sacramento 105, LA Clippers 98.

Chess

LINARES TOURNAMENT (Spain): **Round Eight:** M Adams (Eng) 1, B Gelfand (Belarus) 0; M Ivanchuk (Ukr) 1, G Kasparov (Rus) 0; J Polgar (Hun) 0, V Anand (Ind) 1; A Shirov (Sp) ½, V Kramnik (Rus) ½; V Topalov (Bul) 1, J Piket (Neth) 0; A Dreev (Rus) ½, P Nikolic (Bos) ½. **Leaders:** Kramnik 6; Kasparov 5½; Adams 5; Polar 4½.

Cricket

SHEFFIELD SHIELD: Hobart: South Australia 387 (B Johnson 91, J Scuderi 70) and 209-5 dec (G Parker 68no). Tasmania 248 (R Ponting 126; Scuderi 5-43) and 351-5 (R Ponting 145no). Tasmania won by five wickets. **Perth** (day one): Western Australia 317-3 (M Goodwin 125no) v Queensland.

SUPERSPORT SERIES: First day: East London: Border 312-6 (P Kirsten 127no) v Griqualand West. **Paarl:** Free State 254 (Kosie Venter 59; Williams 4-58). Boland 28-0. **Johannesburg:** Natal 294-7 (J Rhodes 94no; Elsteen 4-66) v Transvaal. **Port Elizabeth:** Eastern Province 330-5 (L Koen 87, K Wessels 58) v Northern Transvaal.

Cycling

TOUR OF THE MEDITERRANEAN: Fourth stage (218km): 1, M Strazzer (It) Roslotto 5hr 11min 24sec; 2, J Kirsipuu (Estonia) Casino; 3, S Barthe (Fr) Casino; 4, M Cipollini (It) Saeco; 5, F Baldato (It) MG Technogym; 6, J Capiot (Bel) TVM; 7, F Frattini (It) Batik; 8, S Uchakov (Ukr) Polti; 9, M Aerts (Bel) Vlaanderen 2002; 10, E Leoni (It) AKI all same time. **Leading overall standings:** 1, E Magnien (Fr) Festina 4hr 02min 05sec; 2, R Virenque (Fr) Festina; 3, D Rous (Fr) Festina; 4, L Dufaux (Switz) Festina all st; 5, Frattini at 4sec; 6, J Odriozola (Sp) Batik; 7, G Colombo (It) Batik both st; 8, Cipollini 7; 9, Strazzer 14; 10, Baldato 19.

Hockey

EUROPEAN INDOOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP: Cologne: A Division: Group A: Valdeluz (Sp) 3, Old Loughtonians 5; Rot-Weiss Cologne 4, WAC Vienna 2; Loughtonians 7, WAC 5; Rot-Weiss 8, Valdeluz 2. **Standings:** 1, Rot-Weiss 6pts; 2, Loughtonians 6. **Group B:** Harvestehuder 18, Bohemians Prague 1; Slagelse (Den) 6, Zurich Grasshoppers 5; Harvestehuder 12, Slagelse 0; Bohemians 11, Zurich 8. **Standings:** 1, Harvestehuder 6; 2, Slagelse 3.

REPRESENTATIVE: RAF 8, Civil Service 2.

Ice Hockey

SUPERLEAGUE: Cardiff 8, Bracknell 2; Manchester 2, Sheffield 2 (ot); Newcastle 2, Ayr 3.

PREMIER LEAGUE: Guildford 5, Solihull 2; Swindon 2, Slough 3.

NHL: New Jersey 4, Hartford 0; Philadelphia 4, Ottawa 2; Chicago 7, San Jose 3; St Louis 4, NY Rangers 1; Phoenix 2, Colorado 3; Calgary 3, Edmonton 2 (ot); Los Angeles 4, Toronto 4 (ot).

Real Tennis

US OPEN (Philadelphia): **Doubles Final:** J Snow/J Male (GB) bt L Deuchar/M Gooding (Aus/GB) 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Snooker

INTERNATIONAL OPEN (Aberdeen): **First round:** S Lee (Eng) bt N Walker (Eng) 5-2; S James (Eng) bt J Woodman (Eng) 5-3; D Harold (Eng) bt B Morgan (Eng) 5-3; A Rosa (Eng) bt J Ferguson (Eng) 5-3; S Ali (Pak) bt W Thorne (Eng) 5-2.

● BAD weather again disrupted the skiing world championships yesterday in Sestriere, Italy, forcing organisers to crowd three races into today's programme which may see some women competing twice.

Warwick with TV form

1.50 Goldingo
2.20 Jet Rules
2.50 Beaumont
3.20 Squire Silk
3.55 King Pin
4.30 Around The Gale
5.00 Ginger Watt

Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest NH outing

1.50 MICHAEL PAGE GROUP HANDICAP HURDLE 2m £4,150
1 11121-5 FROGMARCH (101) (D) R Phillips 7-11-10 ... R Williamson
2 122-334 CHICODARI (21) (CD) D Nicholson 6-11-7 ... A Maguire ★
3 4F0536 THORNTON GATE (14) (D) T Easterby 8-11-2 ... P Carberry
4 0-61232 NEW INN (21) (D) S Gollings 6-11-2 ...
5 00-4PPF KING'S CROSS (14) (D) A J Wilson 8-10-8 ... J Culloty
6 01F1-PP DECIDE YOURSELF (59) (D) T Thomson Jones 7-10-1 ... A Thornton
7 65-2160 SAINT CIEL (21) (D) F Jordan 9-10-0 ... R Supple
8 62142-2 GOLDINGO (9) (CD) G Price 10-10-0 ...

Racing

Moorish ready to prove he is no back number

Ron Cox

MOORISH, something of a forgotten horse since finishing second in the 1994 Triumph Hurdle, is potentially the most interesting runner on view in the first of 11 live televised races today.

Now a seven-year-old, Moorish will be having his first run for Nigel Twiston-Davies in the M & N Group Hurdle at Chepstow.

It is a long time since Moorish showed any worthwhile form for his previous trainer, John White, but he would not be the first horse rejuvenated by a move to the Twiston-Davies yard.

Moorish was rated 155 when finishing well down the field in the Bula Hurdle on his only outing of the current season, but he runs off 135 today and he ran off 158 when competing in his last handicap, the 1996 Tote Gold Trophy.

Suited by soft ground, and trying a new trip (two and a half miles), Moorish (1.15) can show his Triumph Hurdle second to Mysilv was no fluke. He had Kadastrof six lengths behind him in fifth place that day and they meet on similar terms.

On a programme full of interest, Cyborgo (3.50) should continue his learning process over fences, though he does not have a lot in hand of Buckhouse Boy judged on Newbury form.

Mighty Moss (2.15), sure to appreciate the soft ground, can win the Persian War Hurdle despite amateur Fred Hutsby being unable to draw his claim, and Princeful (3.15) should improve on his hurdles debut fifth behind Red Blazer.

At Newcastle, Druid's Brook (4.10) could be a blot on the weights in the Tote Eider Handicap Chase even though he is 5lb out of the handicap.

A former eventer and winning point-to-pointer, Druid's Brook has joined Kim Bailey's stable and got off the mark on his first run over regulation fences at Towcester.

He looks a stayer through and through, and there are lines of form which suggest the eight-year-old is well up to beating ante-post favourite Seven Towers in receipt of 22lb.

Following gutsy victories at Doncaster and Kempton, unbeaten novice Sea Victor (4.45) looks to be on a very fair mark on his handicap debut in the Gosforth Hurdle.

Provided he is none the worse for a spill at Newcastle yesterday, Paul Carberry can complete a treble at Warwick, where Squire Silk (3.20) will be the focus of interest in his clash with Mulligan.

Both are heading for the Arkle Chase at Cheltenham, and in receipt of 7lb today Squire Silk should have the edge. He impressed in beating Eudipe at Newbury last week with Carberry sitting motionless.

Williamson reunited with Oats

Ken Oliver

MASTER OATS, the 1995 Gold Cup winner, returns to action at Punchestown tomorrow with his old riding partner, Norman Williamson.

They team up in the Ericsson National Trial and it is Williamson's first ride for trainer Kim Bailey since they parted company nine months ago. Master Oats, who has been off the course for a year with leg trouble, was yesterday backed from 33-1 to 20-1 with Ladbrokes for the Gold Cup after pleasing Williamson in a schooling session at Lambourn.

"He felt great, he jumped well and seemed to be in good form. I couldn't have been more pleased with him," said Williamson.

Newcastle card with form guide for televised races

1.25 Arian Spirit
1.55 Marello
2.25 Bobby Grant
3.00 The Last Fling
3.35 Nooran
4.10 Druid's Brook
4.45 SEA VICTOR (nap)

Going: Good to soft. ★ Denotes blinkers.

FORM GUIDE - IN TRUTH: Hampered 11th and behind, stayed on closing stages, 14l 4th of 5 finishers behind Konvekta King, with VALIANT WARRIOR (gave 14lb) 13l away, THE LAST FLING (gave 5lb), headway to disputed lead when fell 6 out (Wetherby 2m4f110y hcp ch, Gd-Sft).
FIVELEIGH BUILDS: Led from 2nd to 4 out, led again 2 out, stayed on well, won by 13l from Whispering Steel (Ayr 3m1f hcp ch, Gd).
EASBY JOKER: Never going well, lost touch 8th, tailed off when pulled up last behind General Command (Doncaster 3m hcp ch, Gd). Previously led on bit app last, beat Deep Decision 13l (Newcastle 2m hcp ch, Gd-Sft).
BETTER TIMES AHEAD: Close up until outpaced 12th, weakened 14th, 23l last of 5 behind Whispering ...

316 6-34 WELL ARMED (198) J O'Neill 6-11-4 ... R McGrath (5)
317 000-P WHITEGATES WILLIE (67) J Howard Johnson 5-11-4 ... D Parker
318 00-P0 BONNY RIGG (14) L Lungo 5-10-13 ... T Reed
319 243P05- RACHAEL'S DAWN (287) J Eyre 7-10-13 ... M Moloney
TOP FORM TIPS: Bobby Grant 8, Sutherland Moss 7, Malta Man 6
Betting: 7-4 Bobby Grant, 6-1 Sutherland Moss, 7-1 Shared Risk, Malta Man, 8-1 No Finer Man, 9-1 Well Armed, 16-1 War Whoop, 20-1 Charley Lambert. 19 runners

Channel 4

3.00 BBC RADIO NEWCASTLE BREAKFAST SHOW HANDICAP CHASE 2m 4f £8,667
401 116-505 BETTER TIMES AHEAD (7) (D) G Richards 11-11-12 ... A Dobbin
402 2511-25 VALIANT WARRIOR (14) (CD) M Hammond 9-11-12 ... R Garritty
403 U16-11P EASBY JOKER (21) (CD) S Kettlewell 9-11-5 ... P Niven
404 11U12F THE LAST FLING (14) (D) Mrs S Smith 7-11-3 ... Richard Guest
405 1-42241 FIVELEIGH BUILDS (21) (C) (D) Miss L Russell 10-11-3 ... M Foster
406 PFP-55P ALL THE ACES (56) (D) J O'Neill 10-10-13 ... S McNeill
407 12FP/-34 IN TRUTH (14) S Gollings 9-10-7 ... K Gaule
408 034F35 CROSS CANNON (60) J Wade 11-10-0 ... B Storey
TOP FORM TIPS: Fiveleigh Builds 8, The Last Fling 7, Easby Joker 6
Betting: 9-4 The Last Fling, 7-2 Fiveleigh Builds, 4-1 Easby Joker, 5-1 Valiant Warrior, 6-1 In Truth, 8-1 Better Times Ahead, 25-1 Cross Cannon 8 runners

● Blinkered for the first time — CHEPSTOW: 1.45 Coolree; 2.45 Dom Samourai, Sheer Ability; 3.15 Southernhay Boy. LINGFIELD: 2.40 Broadgate Flyer. NEWCASTLE: 4.10 Ceilidh Boy. WINDSOR: 2.30 Strokesaver.

Windsor runners and riders

1.30 Friendship
2.00 Sparkling Spring
2.30 Sail By The Stars
3.05 Far Dawn
3.40 Plunder Bay
4.15 Sophie May
4.50 More Dash Thancash

Results

Chepstow with TV form

1.15 Moorish
1.45 Bells Life
2.15 Mighty Moss
2.45 Plastic Spaceage
3.15 Princeful (nb)
3.50 Cyborgo
4.25 Menesonic

Going: Soft. ★ Denotes blinkers.

BBC-1

1.15 M & N GROUP HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 4f 110yds £7,022
1 41-3F45 HOME COUNTIES (20) (D) D Moffatt 8-11-12 ... D J Moffatt
2 139/03-1 ANZUM (77) D Nicholson 6-11-10 ... R Johnson
3 65113-0 STORM DAMAGE (7) P Nicholls 5-11-9 ... D Bridgwater
4 P24/60-0 MOORISH (63) N Twiston-Davies 7-11-8 ... C Llewellyn
5 050-201 KADASTROF (14) (C) R Dickin 7-11-7 ... X Aizpuru (7)
6 005-300 THINKING TWICE (21) (CD) N Henderson 8-11-6 ... R Farrant

4 53P/2-30 TEXAN BABY (26) (BF) N Twiston-Davies 8-10-5 ... C Llewellyn
5 3F45-F0 VERYVEL (15) J Neville 6-10-5 ... T J Murphy
6 253-423 MENESONIC (14) R Alner 7-10-5 ... J Culloty
7 2122 KORBELL (9) (D) P Nicholls 8-10-4 ... R Johnson
8 00/012- THE MEXICANS GONE (288) D Geraghty 9-10-0 ... V Slattery
9 213284 GLENGARRIF GIRL (64) (D) M Pipe 7-10-0 ... G Tormey ★
10 4123/-P0 PENNYMOOR PRINCE (14) R Frost 8-10-0 ... J Frost
11 0-14F10 SCOTBY (14) R Buckler 7-10-0 ... B Powell
12 4340/0-5 SPIRIT LEVEL (61) J Payne 9-10-0 ... Mr S Durack (7)
TOP FORM TIPS: Korbell 8, Menesonic 7, Bankhead 6
Betting: 7-2 Korbell, 4-1 Menesonic, 9-2 Bankhead, 6-1 My Rossini, 8-1 Scotby, 10-1 The Mexicans Gone, Glengarrif Girl, 12-1 Texan Baby 12 runners

Lingfield (A.W.)

2.10 Into Debt
2.40 Spaniard's Mount
3.10 Statistician
3.45 Globetrotter
4.20 Riffif
4.55 Persuasion

Draw: Low numbers favoured. Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.

2.10 RED ROSE APPRENTICES' HANDICAP 7f £2,843
1 40-0353 LANCASHIRE LEGEND (7) (CD) S Dow 4-9-13 ... A Daly 3
2 414400- TUIGAMALA (136) (CD) R Ingram 6-9-8 ... D Sweeney 2
3 40-4309 LIFT BOY (9) (C) G L Moore 8-9-6 ... M Batchelor (5) 7
4 3-31021 HAWAII STORM (14) (CD) D French Davis 9-9-3 ... Kerry Baker (5) 10
5 5120/50- VERA'S FIRST (357) (CD) Miss Gay Kelleway 4-9-2 ... Angela Gallimore (5) 1
6 0/0000-0 MASRUF (9) K Bailey 5-8-7 ... Sophie Mitchell 4
7 341-030 RIVER SEINE (16) (CD) S Knight 5-8-4 ... G Faulkner 8
8 00-6483 PRIVATE FIXTURE (12) (CD) D Marks 6-8-4 ... R Mullen (3) 5
9 000-043 ASTRAL INVADER (11) (C) M Saunders 5-8-1 ... P P Murphy 9

SOCCER: THE FA CUP

Underdogs all set to have their day

David Lacey on the teasing possibilities of a fifth round which sees Middlesbrough, Chelsea and Leeds liable to come unstuck

NOT FOR a long time has an FA Cup presented so many contrasting possibilities by the fifth round. The early departure of the Premiership's top four teams has left the field wide open, but will the new crop be vigorous or will the Cup merely lie fallow this year?

The final on May 17 may yet find Zola and Di Matteo facing Ravanelli and Juninho across the halfway line. It could see George Graham shaking hands with the VIPs at Wembley less than a year after completing a 12-month ban for accepting irregular payments on transfers.

There has never been an all-Yorkshire FA Cup final but, with Middlesbrough, Leeds United, Sheffield Wednesday and Bradford City still involved, it could happen this time. The second division has not provided a finalist since the Second Division became the First but suddenly the prospects are good.

Whatever occurs from now on, Wembley is already assured of seeing something comparatively, if not completely, different. Not since 1975 has an FA Cup final failed to feature at least one representative from Merseyside, north London or Old Trafford. That 1975 match was a largely forgettable affair between West Ham United and Fulham, a game best remembered now for the appearances of two old England soldiers Bobby Moore and Alan Mullery.

To find a fifth round missing the names of Liverpool, Everton, Arsenal, Tottenham and Manchester United it is necessary to go back to 1946 and the first post-war FA Cup, which was run on a two-legged basis because playing staffs still had not settled down.

Five of the clubs involved then will be seeking to reach the quarter-finals this weekend while the Cup winners of 1946, Derby County, await the outcome of the remaining fourth-round tie between Blackburn and Coventry.

Fifty-one years ago the city of Bradford had a team in the fifth round but it was not Bradford City. Park Avenue reached the last eight before going out to Birmingham City.

Birmingham are among six clubs in the fifth round this weekend who have yet to win the FA Cup. The others are Leicester City (four times finalists), Middlesbrough, Queens Park Rangers and the two Second Division survivors, Wrexham and Chesterfield, who put out Bolton.

Middlesbrough's expensive aspirations will do well to survive the visit to Maine Road, where Manchester City are at last getting some sort of act together. Ravanelli could continue his one-man assault on the Cup but Emerson's suspension is good for City.

Leicester, with a history of Cup upsets to their credit, may spring another one tomorrow. Making Chelsea favourites, even after their famous removal of Liverpool in the fourth round, always looked a little rash.

Leeds' well-organised victory over Arsenal at Highbury was an impressive reminder of Graham's lasting ability to win big cup ties. But they are far from flawless and Portsmouth could cause a shock at Elland Road.

Provided Sheffield Wednesday survive the Waddle experience at Valley Parade tomorrow the odds against their reaching the final for the second time in five years will continue to shorten.

And if Chesterfield's day is done, Nottingham Forest would not be the first team to combine a relegation struggle with a May day at Wembley. Wrexham, well capable of beating Birmingham, are more likely to be representing the Second Division in tomorrow's quarter-final draw.

It is a rare FA Cup which finds Wimbledon among the favourites at this stage and no sooner will Joe Kinnear's players have finished their tie against Queens Park Rangers than they will be thinking about Tuesday's visit to Leicester in the opening leg of the League Cup semi-finals. If Wimbledon are not careful the perennial underdogs will soon be saddled with a pedigree, but QPR may not be seen off that easily.

If the favoured teams continue to fall, a dog's dinner — or even an underdog's dinner — of a Cup final will remain a gloomy possibility. So much depends on Chelsea not reverting to type at Filbert Street tomorrow.

If they do, however, the last eight may eventually look like this: Wrexham, Sheffield Wednesday, Nottingham Forest, Portsmouth, Leicester City, Manchester City, Wimbledon, Blackburn Rovers.

The big eight

Fifth round

Birmingham City v Wrexham

Wrexham are from similar footballing stock to Stockport, surprise semi-finalists in the League Cup but beaten by Birmingham in the previous round of the FA Cup. Furlong and Devlin, if he is fit, may send Brian Flynn's side the same way but a quarter-final place is within Wrexham's reach after knocking out West Ham.

Forecast:
Birmingham City 1, Wrexham 1

Bradford City v Sheffield Wed

This one is going to be all about Chris Waddle, of course, and the tradition of former players dishing their old teams. But David Pleat will have formulated a plan for whittling Waddle's influence down to size and after one defeat in 17 games a well-organised, tight-passing Wednesday should not lose tomorrow.

Forecast:
Bradford C 1, Sheffield Wed 1

Chesterfield v Nottingham Forest

Kevin Davies's hat-trick at Bolton was the feat of the last round but Forest, even without Pearce, should prove more obdurate and Davies now has tonsillitis. Chesterfield have yet to get past the fifth round and, despite the Cup's tradition for the unexpected, their best hope looks a replay.

Forecast:
Chesterfield 1, Nott'm Forest 2

Leeds United v Portsmouth

Terry Venables has just bought Pompey for a pound and Terry Fenwick's clever, close-passing team won at Wolves in the last round. So what? George Graham's penchant for winning tricky ties brought Leeds a deserved victory at Arsenal. Yet Leeds do not score that often and Portsmouth might just snatch it.

Forecast:
Leeds United 0, Portsmouth 1

Leicester City v Chelsea

A video of Chelsea's stunning fourth-round victory over Liverpool is already out — presumably in case they blow it, which could happen if Heskey and Claridge find too much space tomorrow. Newcastle and Wimbledon have fallen at Filbert Street and Chelsea's 3–1 win there in October may not count for much now.

Forecast:
Leicester 2, Chelsea 1

Manchester City v Middlesbrough

This game could underline City's revival under Frank Clark. Rösler is hungry again and Kinkladze could be as big an influence on the game as Juninho. Middlesbrough will put their faith in Ravanelli's prolific record in the cups, 10 goals so far, and trust that their defence has one of its better days. But Emerson is suspended.

Forecast:
Man City 2, Middlesbrough 1

Wimbledon v QPR

There could very possibly be half a surprise at Selhurst Park today. Wimbledon are rarely at their best when expected to win, and would rather be permanent underdogs. Gayle or Earle can take them to the quarter-finals but Peacock and Spencer have added quality to Queens Park Rangers' attack and Sinclair was there anyway.

Forecast:
Wimbledon 1, QPR 1

Fourth round

Blackburn Rovers v Coventry City

Blackburn have waited three weeks to play this tie and, given Coventry's travails against Woking, should earn themselves a fifth-round visit to Derby without further delay. Coventry's league results have perked up under Gordon Strachan but they will do well to hold Sutton and Gallacher today.

Forecast:
Blackburn 2, Coventry 0

Call to arms . . . Bruce, the old campaigner hopes to be shouting the Cup odds for Birmingham against Wrexham today

Bruce still breathing fire

Peter White on the Birmingham defender dreaming of yet more success at Wembley

STEVE BRUCE is already the proud owner of three FA Cup winners' medals but his desire to add to that collection remains as strong as ever.

Bruce is a born winner, an uncompromising defender and a tough Geordie who for the past 19 years has enjoyed every minute of a career which has brought honours, fame and fortune.

It was generally accepted, when Bruce left his beloved Manchester United last summer to begin a two-year term offered by Trevor Francis at Birmingham City, that his illustrious spell in football had started on a rapid downward spiral. But, secretly, he was determined to prove his critics wrong and now he has one of his greatest soccer achievements firmly in his sight.

In virtually any other season the mention of Birmingham City and the FA Cup in the same breath would be greeted with hoots of derision from all but the most loyal followers of the blue section of the second city, who have for so long been overshadowed by the achievements of the claret and blue of Aston Villa.

But, while Villa and Bruce's former Old Trafford employers have already fallen by the Wembley wayside, Birmingham's route remains wide open.

The last time they reached an FA Cup final, in 1956, the M1 was not even open. Now Bruce is among a growing band who believe an excursion down the fast lane of the M40 in May is not out of the question.

His team take on the highly respected Wrexham at St Andrews today, attempting to reach the last eight of the competition for the first time in 13 years.

During his daily hour-long drive from his home near Manchester to the Birmingham training ground, Bruce has plenty of time to look forward positively, particularly now that Chris Evans has departed the Radio 1 airwaves.

Bruce smiled: "I used to listen to Chris every morning on the way down to training, and he made the time fly. I was very disappointed when he left, so if he happens to read this then all I can say is: Get back on the radio quickly — I need you."

During his radio-assisted jaunts up and down the M6 the 36-year-old also has time to reflect on his contribution to the great Old Trafford revival which began under Alex Ferguson when United beat Crystal Palace in the 1990 FA Cup final replay.

"We were drawn against Nottingham Forest away from home in the fourth round that season. Every one expected us to lose but we won 1-0 thanks to a Mark Robins goal and went on to win the Cup.

"I always felt that was the turning point for United, because we then went on to win the European Cup Winners' Cup the following season, then the Premiership title three times and the Cup twice more before I left.

"I missed last season's Cup final win over Liverpool through injury but the FA still awarded me a medal to complete a trio. I also have a loser's medal from when we played Everton a couple of seasons ago."

> 'The fans have been very patient and it would be nice to repay them'

Even with another gong on his mind, Bruce is not underestimating the threat of Wrexham, who are still talked about for their shock victory over Arsenal five years ago.

They are through to the fifth round this time, courtesey of victories over Colwyn Bay, Scunthorpe and West Ham — all after replays — followed by further success at Peterborough. Defeat for Birmingham would rank on a par, according to Bruce, with the anguish he suffered during his days at Norwich when the Canaries were felled in the third round by Wigan.

Successive home defeats by West Bromwich and Portsmouth have severely diminished Birmingham hopes of securing a First Division play-off place, thus making the FA Cup their only realistic chance of achieving success during their manager Francis's first season back at St Andrews.

Bruce, who is expected to be fit today after a hamstring injury, has become a firm favourite among the Birmingham faithful. His experience and knowlege have erased early scepticism that he joined the club only to secure a weekly wage in excess of £15,000.

"Those two defeats have rocked us," admitted Bruce. "So I suppose the best way to bounce back is to beat Wrexham. It is not often that a team can hope for such a good opportunity to reach the quarter-finals. Birmingham supporters have had to wait a long time for something to shout about. They have been very patient, so it would be nice to repay them."

A couple of hundred yards down the road from Birmingham's training ground lies the Man on the Moon public house. If Birmingham do fulfil Bruce's Wembley dream, then even at his advanced footballing age he will have every right to try to jump over it.

A new way to curry favour

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

READERS of the other Guardian Diary may be familiar with one Abdul Latif, an unashamed self-publicist hailing from Bangladesh and now living in Newcastle.

His list of stunts is impressive. Last year he bought himself the title Lord of Harpole. In the last general election he stood for the Democrats in the Newcastle East seat, entitling him to have his election address delivered free by Royal Mail. He kindly attached a menu for his Rupali restaurant too. Said restaurant also boasts the world's hottest curry: finish one and it's free.

So locals may be gasping at his latest offer: if Newcastle United win the Premiership he has pledged to give each of the club's season-ticket holders a £10 meal free. The bill would be £320,000.

A BIT miserly of the Football Association to uphold the docking of two points from Brighton for their fans' on-pitch protest. Of course, the FA will now follow its own example by forfeiting two World Cup points because of the England fan who ran on to the Wembley pitch on Wednesday. Won't it?

QUOTE of the Week — Bobby Gould on Paul "dodgy knees" McGrath: "I don't know if referees will allow him to use his Zimmer frame next year. To be able to stand still and play football is an art."

NICE BIT of Business of the Week: Steve Jones joined West Ham from Bournemouth for £200,000, played 11 games without scoring and has now moved to Charlton for £400,000.

APPARENTLY Estonia have been ordered to replay their World Cup qualifier because this time the real Scotland did not turn up.

LOCAL critics say the quality of the Chinese league is deteriorating, with less exciting play, fewer goals, more bookings and players too weak to complete a full game at high speed.

So the players from all 12 first division teams, including the full national side, have been in a closed winter training camp since December, running 12km a day and following strict exercise routines at the demanding altitude of 2,000m.

Visitors are kept away, the players are not allowed to use mobile phones and were even banned from going home for the Chinese new year. Why so strict? According to Wang Junsheng, vice-chairman of the China FA: "The winter drill this year is a merciless fight against evil habits of not being strict that have long existed on the football field."

NIGERIA have just appointed a new coach called Monday Sinclair. So if they were to play a weekend friendly against Abergavenny at Hillsborough we could have Monday playing Thursday at Wednesday on Sunday. A pity Robin Friday is no longer with us.

A PERFECTLY logical question comes from C J Buston of Sheffield. If Alan Shearer is on course to score against every Premiership team, does this mean he has to score an own-goal?

EXPECT more problems with Mrs Emerson before long. One of the ways Middlesbrough calmed Mr Emerson last year was to try and cure his wife's home-sickness. So a huge black dish went up on the side of the family home in the exclusive village of Ingleby Barwick to pick up Brazilian and Portuguese television. Unfortunately the neighbours complained and the council have ordered the Emersons to take it down.

THE Celta Vigo defender Borja Aguirretxu faces a two-year ban after testing positive for the steroid nandrolene. It is enough to make him tear his hair out. For, according to the club's medical staff, the steroid was contained in tablets the player was taking for a very ticklish problem. Said the club doctor Genaro Borras: "For the last year he's been taking tablets to stop hair loss."

A N Other

WHEN he was approaching his prime this busy midfielder looked an international possibility but he did not quite fulfil his considerable potential. Nevertheless he enjoyed a good career which started amid the best china and then took him north to join scholarly scientists. He then moved among some bull rings, both abroad and at home, before travelling along a major city thoroughfare. Then it was back to the pots for a while before he scaled new moorish heights, where he went into management.

Last week: Barry Fry (Manchester United, Bolton, Luton, Leyton Orient, Gravesend, Leyton Orient, Dunstable).

Performance of the week: Karl Le Tissier, brother of Matthew, who let the England team, and Glenn Hoddle's tactics, out of the bag in a radio broadcast before Wednesday's World Cup qualifier with Italy.

West Ham dig deep to tempt Hartson away

Martin Thorpe

JUST when it looked as though West Ham would never want to see another foreigner again, they buy a Welshman. John Hartson surprisingly moved across town from Arsenal yesterday to join the relegation-threatened Hammers for a club-record £5 million.

He will play alongside their other recent big-money signing, the £2.3 million Paul Kitson, a striking partnership the club hope will solve their scoring problem and keep the team in the Premiership.

Arsène Wenger's decision to reduce his striking resources down to only Wright and Bergkamp prompted speculation that a high-profile replacement was about to be signed. But it seems more a case of the Frenchman being unable to resist the Hartson fee while feeling that in the case of injuries he can push Merson forward.

"Arsène Wenger said he didn't want me to go but wouldn't stand in my way if I wanted to leave," said Hartson, who joined Arsenal from Luton for £2.5 million in 1995 but grew frustrated at the lack of first-team games. He has scored three goals in 19 league appearances this season.

West Ham's much publicised search for new players, following the failure of their foreign experiment, ended after five minutes — the time it took Hartson to say yes to the move, so disappointing a host of other clubs.

"I knew immediately it was the club I wanted to come to," said Hartson. "And I would not have come if I thought we were going down."

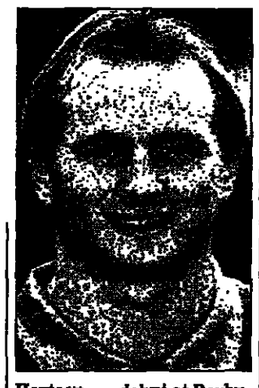
The 21-year-old Welsh international represents a long-term post-Bosman investment by the club, who have signed him on a five-year contract. Though the fee was outside West Ham's original budget, they have met it by linking payments to appearances and goals and staggering other payments over 12 months.

"It was obvious we had to make a move and get the right player in," said the West Ham manager Harry Redknapp. "He will be a terrific asset."

However Hartson, who makes his debut at Derby today, has picked up 11 bookings this season and is one away from a two-game ban.

Ronnie Whelan has been reinstated as Southend's manager four days after he was suspended by the club and 24 hours after picking up an FA misconduct charge following a touchline incident on Saturday.

The Barcelona coach Bobby Robson has been told by the club's board that, if the team do not beat Racing Santander tomorrow, he will be sacked. This follows a newspaper poll in Spain showing 77.4 per cent of Barca fans want him out.



Hartson . . . debut at Derby

Australia's coach Terry Venables has called up 14 British-based players to form the nucleus of a 30-man squad for a three-day training camp in London from February 24.

Marcus Browning, Bristol Rovers' Welsh international midfielder, has joined Huddersfield for £500,000. Ray Harford has made his first signing as West Bromwich manager, buying the left-back Graham Potter from Southampton for a fee thought to be between £50,000 and £100,000.

Bolton and Wolves have been charged by the FA over the brawl that marred last month's League game.

Liverpool have formed an "alliance" with Second Division Crewe designed to enhance the development of young players but deny Crewe will become a "feeder" club.

The England defender Gareth Southgate last night signed a 4½-year contract with Aston Villa believed to be worth more than £10,000 a week.

Scottish preview

Them puts Rangers on hold

Patrick Glenn

WALTER SMITH, the Rangers manager, is optimistic that the Roma and Sweden midfielder Jonas Thern will accept an offer to join the Ibrox club.

Thern's agreement with the Italian side expires at the end of the season and Rangers are one of a number of clubs chasing him. The Swede has several options, however, including an offer of increased terms from Roma.

Smith, who met Thern in the Italian capital on Monday, said: "I've seen newspaper reports suggesting that he has decided to join us. Well, he hasn't indicated that to us. He will when he has considered all his choices."

Paul Gascoigne, who missed England's defeat by Italy on Wednesday, is likely to be out of Rangers' team for at least two weeks. The midfielder's damaged ankle is proving slow to heal.

Gascoigne is unlikely to be missed today when Rangers entertain the First Division's bottom team, East Fife, in the fourth round of the cup. "Paul has bruising right on the bone and healing is a slow process," said Smith. "We can't really tell how quickly it will clear."

Rangers will also be without Alan McLaren, still not recovered from the calf injury that caused him to miss Scotland's draw with Estonia on Tuesday.

Dundee United preface their trip to Ibrox on Wednesday with tomorrow's tie against Hearts at Tynecastle. The three meetings this season have produced odd-goal victories on each occasion, United winning twice.

"I've always viewed the cup as the short route to glory," said United's manager Tommy McLean, who led Motherwell to their triumph in 1991. "Win five games and you take the trophy. It's also another opportunity to reach Europe."

McLean has no injury problems but the Hearts manager Jim Jefferies has to cope without the suspended defender Paul Ritchie, who scored in last week's win against Kilmarnock.

Celtic travel to face Hibernian on Monday and seem certain to be without Jorge Cadete, who is wanted by Portugal for Wednesday's friendly with Greece.

"We're still trying to arrange to fly him out on Tuesday morning but it looks as though the Portuguese won't have that," said Celtic's manager Tommy Burns.

Chelsea's Gullit back on the Maldini trail

RUUD GULLIT, not content with three Italian World Cup men — Roberto Di Matteo, Gianluca Vialli and Gianfranco Zola — in his squad, is eager to sign Italy's captain Paolo Maldini.

The Chelsea player-manager lost interest in the AC Milan defender last month when quoted a world record fee of £17 million but Milan's coach Arrigo Sacchi has signed Holland's Winston Bogarde and Patrick Kluivert, so Gullit plans a new offer.

"I heard a rumour that all the older players have to leave Milan because they want to build up a new side," said Gullit, a former San Siro team-mate of Maldini's. Next week Chelsea fly to Italy for a friendly against the five-times European Cup winners.

Arsenal will be without their goalkeeper David Seaman for the north London derby against Tottenham at White Hart Lane today. He is resting the damaged knee ligament that kept him out of the England side on Wednesday. Tony Adams, also absent at Wembley, is doubtful. He twisted an ankle in the Cup tie against Leeds.

Tottenham expect their £2.6 million striker Steffen Iversen to be fit and Darren Anderton could make his first start for seven weeks after knee trouble but Spurs are still without Teddy Sheringham, Chris Armstrong and the newcomers John Scales and Ramon Vega, so Arsenal will start hot favourites to complete a Premiership double after their 3–1 Highbury win in November.

Rugby Union

FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP – Ireland v England at Lansdowne Road

Old cronies on collision course

Robert Armstrong in Dublin on today's tacticians Brian Ashton and Jack Rowell

THE time when an Ireland coach could tell his players to "spread out in a bunch and keep the ball up in the air" may have long gone but Brian Ashton knows that a touch of Irish whimsy will not go amiss at Lansdowne Road today.

Passion can be taken for granted — the first sight of the red rose will ensure that — and physical power runs throughout the Irish team but Ashton will also be looking for the quirky instinct that often produces scores.

Indeed the contrasts between Ashton, a steely leprechaun who wants rugby to be a thing of seamless beauty, and his old Bath chief Jack Rowell, for whom winning is everything, could well hold the key to the outcome of this unpredictable occasion.

The Irish squad have responded to Ashton's creative promptings, building fresh options into their game plan day by day, while England have tried to add a bit of brio to the basics.

England have had to endure a great deal of criticism, both internal and external, under Rowell, even though his record of 18 wins in 23 matches would have made him a national icon in any of the other home countries. This season he is trying to replace England's dour pragmatism with a more flexible framework that emphasises the need to keep the ball in hand.

Ireland have been forced to travel further and faster to stay in touch with their Five Nations partners, which explains why Ashton, an Englishman of repute, has been paired with a canny New Zealander, Mike Brewer, who has added polish to the pack.

The measure of Ashton's success is that within four weeks of their abject home defeat by Italy, Ireland deservedly beat Wales in Cardiff and scored three tries.

It would be simplistic to pigeon-hole Rowell as a set-piece perfectionist and Ashton as a mercurial orchestrator of the backs, though there is a grain of truth in both images.

"When I brought Brian to Bath," Rowell said recently, "we knew the game was changing rapidly and that forwards would have to become interactive and multi-skilled. That is why I asked Brian, who is a good backs coach, to work with the forwards."

Rowell enjoys nothing better than standing in the line-out with his England forwards, throwing his arms up as the ball comes in, and teasing everyone into a state of confusion or irritability with his provocative remarks.

"If Jack believes something is not quite right," said Ashton, "he will break down a drill into its constituent parts and then rehearse each bit over and over again until the players get it right. He is great at pushing people on to surpass their previous best performance."

Neither man is wholly comfortable with the short-term imperatives of international rugby, in which the next match is always the most important one and a team is judged only on its last game. Ashton, who as yet has no contract with the Irish RFU, is vulnerable to the sudden, irrational losses of form to which Ireland are prone. Rowell for his part is painfully aware that dogged trench-work of the type that secured the recent 20–18 victory over Argentina is not crowd-pleasing enough for his critics.

Still, if the promises from both camps are to be believed, there should be more coherent passages of play and exciting individual cameos than this fixture usually produces.

"There will be a lot more to our game than passion," said Ashton. "It may be necessary to destroy for 10 seconds in order to create something but our aim is to win the game and that will be attained only by being creative."

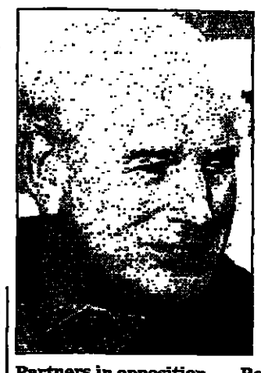
Rowell felt England's recent four-try victory over Scotland had produced "green shoots" which he hoped would develop in a robust fashion against the Irish. "With lifting allowed, it's easier to win some line-out ball in Dublin these days, so we should be able to attack with greater width than in the past," he said.

"But Brian has added style to the thrust of Ireland's organisation and we expect it to be a close-run thing. After all, they beat Wales, whom I regard as one of the leading teams in the Five Nations."

By the high standards England set themselves their recent record against Ireland, which includes championship defeats in 1993–94, is not convincing. The mental edge England usually have against the Scots and the Welsh sometimes vanishes when they are confronted by a sea of frenzied green shirts. Certainly Ashton hopes to see his players wreck English composure early on when he promises "a traditional Irish welcome".

No matter how positive their intentions, Ireland know they must cut off England's supply of quick ball at source, in the back row, to stand an even chance of winning. For that reason the Irish No. 8 Eric Miller and the England open-side Richard Hill will probably be the crucial competitors. Whoever gains the upper hand in the loose should be able to establish the platform of control needed to put flesh on the dreams of Ashton and Rowell.

Other players, such as the fly-halves Eric Elwood and Paul Grayson, will be only too eager to strut their stuff but, as Ashton frequently remarks, it is very hard to play rugby without the ball.



Partners in opposition . . . Rowell, left, and Ashton

Lansdowne Road teams

IRELAND		ENGLAND
J Staples (Harlequins, capt)	15	T Stimpson (Newcastle)
D Hickie (St Mary's College)	14	J Sleightholme (Bath)
J Bell (Northampton)	13	W Carling (Harlequins)
M Field (Malone)	12	P de Glanville (Bath, capt)
J Topping (Ballymena)	11	T Underwood (Newcastle)
E Elwood (Lansdowne)	10	P Grayson (Northampton)
N Hogan (Terenure College)	9	A Gomarsall (Wasps)
N Popplewell (Newcastle)	1	G Rowntree (Leicester)
R Needale (Newcastle)	2	M Regan (Bristol)
P Wallace (Saracens)	3	J Leonard (Harlequins)
P Johns (Saracens)	4	M Johnson (Leicester)
J Davidson (London Irish)	5	S Shaw (Bristol)
D Corkery (Bristol)	6	L Dallaglio (Wasps)
D McBride (Malone)	7	R Hill (Saracens)
E Miller (Leicester)	8	T Rodber (Northampton)

REPLACEMENTS: Ireland: D Humphreys (London Irish), G O'Mara (Cork Constitution), G Fulcher (London Irish), P Stavin (Blackrock College), A Clarke (Northampton), A Foley (Shannon).

England: J Guscott (Bath), M Catt (Bath), A Healey (Leicester), B Clarke (Richmond), D Garforth (Leicester), R Cockerill (Leicester).

Referee: C Hawke (New Zealand)

Buddies through thick and thin

The clothes-prop lock and the hooker with short, fat hairy legs at centre stage in Dublin with their incongruous Bristol double act. **Frank Keating** reports

THE TWO Bristol confrères look incongruous as they change alongside each other in the England dressing-room. They could be mistaken for a vaudeville double act preparing to take the stage — the long clothes-prop craning over the bullet-headed squat one with the short, fat, hairy legs.

In height there is about a foot between Simon Shaw and Mark Regan, in weight almost four stone and in age, with Regan the older at 25, the difference is exactly a year.

Their careers have been closely entwined for nearly six years: Regan throwing in to the 6ft 9in line-out ladder and Shaw, in his turn in the scrummage, bending low to chafe his lantern chin against the massive thickness of his buddy's tree-trunk thighs. They have been together a long time, for club and now country, and the relationship looks likely to be extended as, presuming no disasters at Lansdowne Road, each will surely be named on the Lions' long list preliminary to both being on the short list of those who travel to South Africa in May.

Nor could their natures be more different. Regan is happiest among the close-knit familiarity of years or, ideally, snug in the closed-shop freemasonry of his front-row chapel. There he is relaxedly self-deprecating: "After all, who am I? Even being capped by England last year made me only as famous round our way as any Bristol City midfielder."

In contrast it is by no means only Shaw's size that makes him stand out in a crowd; he is an engaging smiler, a gregarious chuckler and an interested extrovert generous with his pleasantries. After grievous and successive injuries to knee and ankle had threatened to end Shaw's remarkable progress — he was playing for a senior England side in South Africa at 20, only four years after first seeing a rugby ball — he has taken to the intensity of full internationals this season with a luminous and precocious relish; his presence at the front of the line has been as bold as his tackles all over the shop and he has scarcely batted an eyelid, either at surprised and desperate opponents' off-putting skulduggery or at the bouquets and plaudits the critics have bestowed.

> The relationship looks likely to be extended on the Lions' short list

His friend Regan should have been so lucky: the hooker was given a far more reticent reception following his first international season last year; at times, and from some scathing know-alls detached and smug in their warm overcoats high in the grandstand, it was poisonously hostile, particularly about his crucial throwing-in at the line-out.

Regan battled through the criticism with valour and gumption. He is now accepted as a top-drawer all-rounder, as Shaw is delighted to testify: "It was crazy how you guys underestimated Mark. It may be an old cliché but he puts in an awesome amount of work which those behind the touch-line can never see. I know that every fellow forward, home and away, admires him tremendously. The criticism last year hit him badly. But he's a gritty fighter and now all the praise he's getting is just deserts. As for throwing-in, he's terrific; it's just second nature to us now."

Regan still puts in time at his father's crane firm. Shaw read fine arts at Bristol University, then changed to business studies. Both agree their senior tutor at the arts and sciences of the leverage business was Bristol's line-out wizard Andy Blackmore.

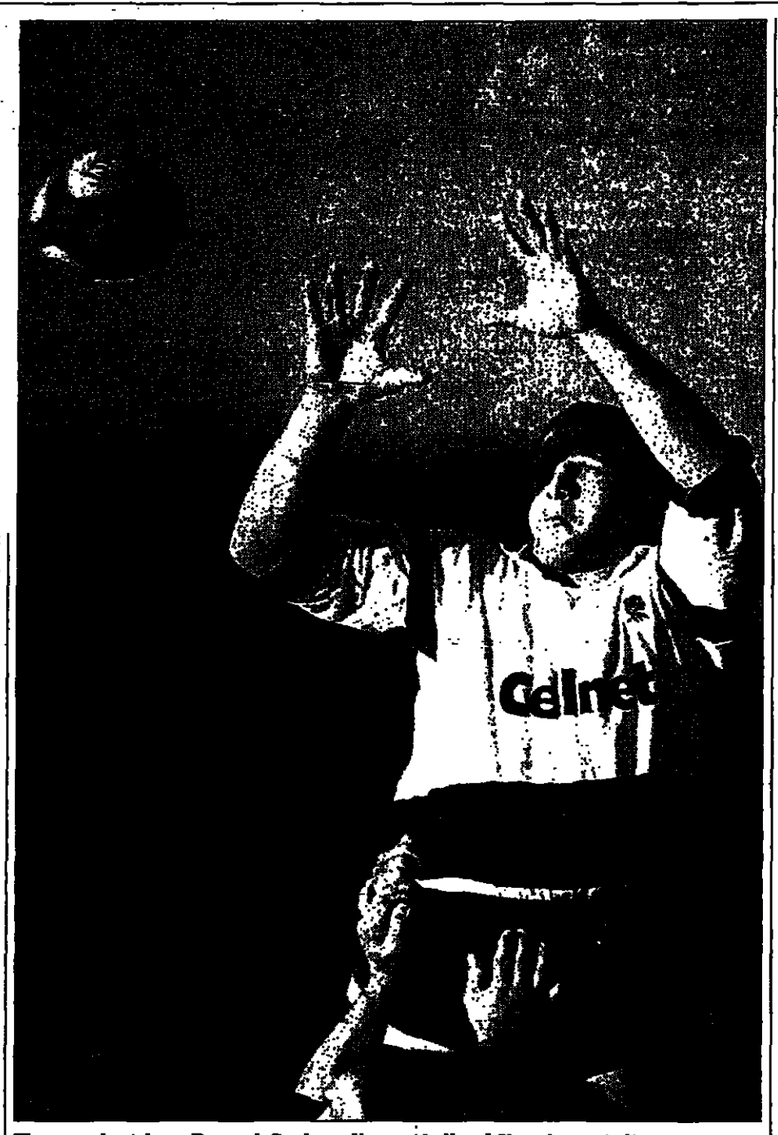
"He had the ability to stretch and make a bad throw brilliant," says Regan. "I learned everything from Andy," says Shaw. "He was streets ahead, so athletically and technically brilliant he could get up there on his own without any help, but now the new lifting laws have miffed him because he finds all these little short-arses being hoisted up in the air alongside him. Not fair, eh?"

Shaw has five times, at various grades, marked Kobus Weise, the Springbok world champion jumper. The youngster is undaunted as he is unstinting in admiration. "On his own ball he makes it damnably difficult to get anywhere near him. It is not so much the height of his jump but the timing and his utter concentration and total refusal to be distracted by any messing about, barging or knocking his arms.

"He is also master of a line-out man's priority — to realise at once how much the ref of the day is prepared either to ignore or pounce on. Nor has legalised lifting made it easier, just different. Now opponents gang up to obstruct the lifters, so you're up there with the mayhem below you, and the tiniest twist out of kilter and your timing's gone, and so has the ball and you look a total clot." A rich guffaw.

Regan is Bristol through and through, Shaw adopted. The latter has been around in spirit and also in fact. His father is a top engineer, the family travelled. Simon was born in Kenya, schooled until 16 in Barcelona, where his parents still live. He remembers Dad watching the Five Nations matches on satellite television. Simon grunted "Ugh!" and went out to play basketball "Olé!" or support Real Madrid. Dad is also 6ft 9in; so is Uncle James.

The family will be over in Dublin. The Barbarians match against the Springboks at Lansdowne Road three years ago "was my first really big match, big crowd, big crack. Molly Malone and all that. Kobus Wiese taught me another thing or three but I thought, wow, this is fun, this is the big time, I like it, I want more." And the engaging, good fellow is imminently due for more of the same at Lansdowne Road. Much more.



Throw and catch . . . Regan, left, aims a line-out ball and Shaw jumps to it DAVID ROGERS

Ireland A 30, England A 44

Diprose rouses England after Burke bonanza

Robert Armstrong at Donnybrook

AN INSPIRATIONAL display by the No. 8 Tony Diprose powered England to a six-try victory over an Ireland side that included nine capped players.

The Saracens captain roused his forwards from their early torpor with exemplary all-round skills and a splendid try that helped England retrieve a 19–0 deficit.

The Ireland coach David Haslett paid tribute to England's loose forwards, among whom the Leicester open-side Neil Back was a source of consistently good ball. "We had a great start," he said, "but losing our fly-half Paul Burke with concussion early on created continuity problems."

Ireland scored three tries in the opening 13 minutes that owed everything to Burke's willingness to run straight at the opposing defence. First the fly-half instigated a sweeping right-to-left move which ended in Woods sending Keane over.

Three minutes later Burke made a scorching break down the left and unloaded a crisp pass to the full-back O'Shea, who crossed unhindered. Within minutes the New Zealand-born prop Walsh charged down a Greenstock kick before scoring on the left.

Fortunately for England, Burke had to withdraw after 16 minutes, forcing Ireland to bring on a kicking fly-half in Niall Malone.

In the second quarter England's comeback gathered momentum, thanks chiefly to Diprose, who sent Adebayo racing away for a 29th-minute try. Seven minutes later Diprose scored an excellent driving try himself to narrow the gap to 22–15.

Shortly after half-time England drew level when the scrum-half Benton scored a breakaway try. Keane, one of three place-kickers used by the Irish, restored Ireland's lead with a penalty but generally poor goal-kicking let Ireland down.

England took full control in a 12-minute spell midway through the second half when three well-worked tries exposed frailties in the Ireland defence. Again Diprose was involved, helping Greenstock to score on the left, then Back and Mapletoft crossed in turn to give England a 44–25 lead. Near the end Malone scored Ireland's fourth try, bursting on to a short pass from McIvor.

SCORERS: Ireland A: Tries: Keane, O'Shea, Walsh, Malone. Conversions: Burke 2. Penalties: Keane 2. England A: Tries: Adebayo, Diprose, Benton, Greenstock, Back, Mapletoft. Conversions: Mapletoft 4. Penalties: Mapletoft 2.

IRELAND A: C O'Shea (London Irish); D Crotty (Garryowen), K McQuilkin (Lansdowne), K Keane (Garryowen; M Lynch, Young Munster, 76min), N Woods (London Irish); P Burke (Bristol; N Malone, Leicester, 16), S McIver (Garryowen); N Burley (Moseley), M McDermott (Lansdowne), G Walsh (Northampton; A McKeen, Lansdowne, 76), S Jameson (St Mary's), B Cusack (Bath), S Dennis (Malone), K Dawson (London Irish), B Cronin (Garryowen).

ENGLAND A: N Beal (Northampton); A Adebayo (Bath), M Greenstock (Wasps), W Greenwood (Leicester, capt), D Luger (Harlequins); M Mapletoft (Gloucester), S Benton (Gloucester); R Hardwick (Coventry), D West (Leicester), J Mallett (Bath), G Archer (Newcastle), J Fowler (Sale), M Corry (Bristol; S Ojomoh, Bath, 81), N Back (Leicester), A Diprose (Saracens).

Referee: P Adams (Wales).

£46,000 says England to win

A FEMALE punter has bet £46,000, thought to be the largest amount ever staked on a rugby match, on England beating Ireland today.

The same unnamed woman staked £18,000 on England beating Scotland a fortnight ago, winning £3,000 at 1–6.

She stands to collect more than £15,000 if England win again today at 1–3.

"If I had that sort of cash riding on the outcome of a game I'd want to be in the dressing-room giving the pre-match team-talk," said a spokesman for William Hill.

France v Wales at Parc des Princes

Evans in the mood to end Paris famine

Ian Malin

WALES bid the Parc des Princes a not-so-fond *adieu* today. When they return to Paris in 1999 it will be to the Stade de France, being built across the city to host next year's soccer World Cup.

Wales will hardly miss the Parc, having lost there on their last 10 visits, a run that stretches back to 1975, and they may be excused for feeling heavy-hearted on their way to that vast concrete bowl this afternoon.

Wales's home defeat by Ireland a fortnight ago, when the French had their feet up to recover from their impressive 32–15 win in Dublin last month, makes *Les Tricolores* favourites to extend their winning home run.

But there are reasons for Welsh optimism. The uncompromising nature of the French club game has led to today's side being shorn of five injured players: Emile Ntamack, Thomas Castaignède, Alain Penaud, Fabien Galthié and Philippe Benetton have all hobbled out of contention. The prop Franck Tournaire had already been banned for kicking the Ireland hooker Allen Clarke at Lansdowne Road.

Wales's expansive style has rewarded their supporters with seven tries in their two games. With Allan Bateman restored at centre after his knee cartilage operation and Gareth Thomas back to his best position on the wing, Wales can certainly worry the French.

Richard Dourthe will meet Bateman head-on and the controversial Dax centre is giving Wales plenty of respect. Dourthe, who missed the Dublin visit when he knocked himself out in a training accident, rates the Welsh scrum as better than England's.

"They're a fine combination of power and talent. I watched England against Scotland and I wasn't at all impressed. I think Wales are more dangerous than England this year," he said.

The coach Jean-Claude Skrela has promised that France will attack from deep positions and, if he keeps his word and Wales maintain the hands-on style epitomised by their mercurial fly-half Arwel Thomas, today's game could turn out to be a classic.

France, though, do have impressive strength in depth. Any side that can leave a player of the quality of the Brive full-back Sebastian Viars on the bench must be feared. Viars was magnificent in Brive's recent European Cup triumph over Leicester, as was Christophe Lamaison in the centre.

Lamaison moves to fill Penaud's fly-half berth today, a bold move by Skrela, who yesterday insisted his squad were in good heart. "All these injuries have brought us even more closely together," added his captain Abdel Benazzi.

Skrela's opposite number Kevin Bowring was the mastermind behind Wales's victory over the French in Cardiff last spring.

"While France are always a much more difficult proposition in Paris, we've shown that they can be beaten if the players' attitude and commitment is absolutely right," said Bowring. "Last year we tackled them to the ground and spent almost the entire afternoon going forward."

Wales can end their drought if they play with the sort of verve they displayed at Murrayfield and Ieuan Evans, in magificent form in this tournament, could prove a handful for his marker David Venditti.

Evans, a leading candidate to lead the Lions this summer, will be particularly keen to impress their manager Fran Cotton, a spectator in Paris today.

But the most likely result today would be a French win of the margin of their 40–33 victory in a friendly over Wales in Cardiff last September.

Parc des Princes teams

FRANCE		WALES
J L Sadourny (Colomiers)	15	N Jenkins (Pontypridd)
L Leflamand (Bourgoin)	14	I Evans (Llanelli)
R Dourthe (Dax)	13	A Bateman (Richmond)
S Glas (Bourgoin)	12	S Gibbs (Swansea)
D Venditti (Brive)	11	G Thomas (Bridgend)
C Lamaison (Brive)	10	A Thomas (Swansea)
P Carbonneau (Brive)	9	R Howley (Cardiff)
C Califano (Toulouse)	1	C Loader (Swansea)
M Dal Maso (Agen)	2	J Humphreys (Cardiff, capt)
J L Jordana (Toulouse)	3	D Young (Cardiff)
O Merle (Montferrand)	4	G Llewellyn (Harlequins)
H Miorin (Toulouse)	5	M Rowley (Pontypridd)
R Castel (Béziers)	6	S Williams (Neath)
A Benazzi (Agen, capt)	7	C Charvis (Swansea)
F Pelous (Dax)	8	S Quinnell (Richmond)

REPLACEMENTS: France: S Viars (Brive), D Auzagne (Pau), G Accoceberry (Bègles-Bordeaux), O Magne (Dax), P Trillo-Capdevila (Pau), M de Rougemont (Toulon).

Wales: J Davies (Cardiff), P John (Pontypridd), P Arnold (Swansea), H Taylor (Cardiff), L Mustoe (Cardiff), G Jenkins (Swansea).

Referee: P Marshall (Australia)

Wainwright back as Watsonians look to cash in

WATSONIANS, only a week a way from a potential Premiership decider with the champions Melrose, are looking no further than today's visit of Stirling County.

"We are trying to deflect the players' minds from the big game next week," said Peter Gallagher, the Watsonians coach. "We are aware that Stirling are playing much better now than they were early in the season, and so this will be a tough hurdle for us."

The Scotland captain Rob Wainwright returns for Watsonians, who need to improve their points difference, but they may have to start without the new international cap Tom Smith, who has a slight back problem.

Stirling, meanwhile, are playing much more confidently. "We are a bit more comfortable about our play," said their manager Ralph McNaught. "We'll be going all out for a win."

Melrose, who should have little trouble against Heriot's at the Greenyards, field the side that defeated Hawick last week.

Sport in brief

Cricket

Kent have signed Zimbabwe's batting leg-spinner Paul Strang as overseas player for this summer in place of Carl Hooper, who would not have been available until mid-June because West Indies have arranged a two-Test series against Sri Lanka. The county have started their search for a new coach as the Australian Daryl Foster has asked to retire 12 months early from his contract.

Nottinghamshire have joined Durham in the chase for Sussex's wicketkeeper-batsman Martin Speight.

Tennis

The resurgent Greg Rusedski earned a quarter-final match against Michael Chang in the San Jose ATP tournament with an impressive 6–3, 6–1 win over Canada's Daniel Nestor. Victory could take the British No. 2 past his best world ranking of 33.

Chess

The previously struggling Vassily Ivanchuk beat the world champion Garry Kasparov in the eighth round of the elite Linares tournament, *writes Leonard Barden.*

Playing Black in a King's Indian, Kasparov lost material and, when he overstepped the time limit at move 36, his game was hopeless. He is now a half-point behind Russia's Vladimir Kramnik. Britain's Michael Adams, who won in 41 moves against Boris Gelfand, is third.

Figure Skating

Tonya Harding has reacted angrily to scepticism in her home town of Portland, Oregon, over her claims to have been abducted at knife-point by a bushy-haired stranger early on Wednesday.

The American, whose former husband had her Olympic rival Nancy Kerrigan attacked with an iron bar at the 1994 US Championships, said she escaped by ramming the kidnapper's truck into a tree. But radio talk-show callers accused her of mounting a publicity stunt to promote her skating exhibition in Nevada.

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From Gunner to Hammer
John Hartson moves east in £5m deal
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A touch of the Irish
Brian Ashton scents English blood
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The Guardian
sport

SPINNERS STRIVE TO REGAIN CONTROL

Captain out . . . the wicketkeeper Alec Stewart and Nasser Hussain come to meet the bowler Robert Croft after the stumping of New Zealand's stand-in Stephen Fleming CLIVE MASON

New Zealand v England: third Test, first day

England take the slow lane

Paul Weaver in Christchurch appreciates the undying value of top-class spin

THERE is a member of this England party who is as anonymous but at the same time as hands-on as a puppeteer. He has been low-profile in Zimbabwe and New Zealand, anxious to do his work off-stage. But look closely behind the curtain, notice the slighty upturned nose and the mincing Jack Benny gait, and the figure is unmistakable.

This is John Emburey, the assistant coach, the professionals' professional, Peckham-born and with as much street wisdom as that other famous son of London SE15, Del Boy Trotter.

On the opening day of the third Test against New Zealand here yesterday, as Robert Croft saved Mike Atherton's blushes after the England captain decided to bowl, twirling away for three for 49 while Phil Tufnell kept it watertight at the other end, we waited for Emburey to burst from the wings.

That is not his style but by the end of this tour the man who has been as inconspicuous as the baggage handler may deserve to be delivered by fanfare.

If Croft is the short-odds favourite to emerge from this often frustrating tour as England's outstanding player, and if Tufnell, a sometimes artless dodger and the game's roll-your-own model, looks capable of trading in his smoke ring for a halo, then Emburey should take the credit.

Emburey, now 45, was England's best off-spinner for a generation. He has 147 Test wickets, though his record, after 64 matches and with an average of 38.40, is slightly disappointing. Croft may improve on that, even in this age of the wrist-spinner.

When Croft first made his name at Glamorgan he appeared to have as much potential as a number of other off-spinning all-rounders: Peter Willey, Geoff Miller, Vic Marks and Mike Watkinson.

But Croft, even though he has a long way to go, offers promise of becoming an altogether more valuable commodity, a front-line off-spinner who can rattle through a Test team but can also bat a bit, just like Emburey and, before him, Fred Titmus and Ray Illingworth.

Yesterday, after New Zealand had reached 229 for five and a position of patient parity after being put in on a greenish but ultimately easy-paced pitch, Emburey was teased out of hiding to talk about Croft, with whom he has been working closely.

"He's not yet a great bowler but he's a damn good one who's improving all the time. He doesn't stop talking and asking questions. He's got this thirst for knowledge. He's exhausted me.

"He's got a good action, a good loop and he's a bigger spinner than me. He has nice control, a good change of pace and he flights it well. He also adapts quickly to the pace of the pitch. Even today, when he had to bowl slightly quicker with a flatter trajectory, he made the ball dip.

"I was impressed by the way he bowled to the left-handed Stephen Fleming, over the wicket, attacking leg and middle-and-leg so the batsman had to play against the spin but also guard against the drifter that might get him lbw.

"Crofty has bowled really well on this tour, better than I've seen him in England. He's matured. He's aggressive and always learning. I can't fault him. With him and Tuffers we have a pair of spinners who can go on for six or seven years, players to build a side around.

"Crofty is 26. In my experience a spinner reaches his peak around 28 and holds it there for about 10 years. Today he got a few balls to turn and, even though this didn't look like a turning wicket at the start, I assure you it will be by the end of the game."

Atherton has chosen to bowl each time he has won the toss in New Zealand. He did so again yesterday, even though the four previous occasions ended with one defeat and three draws. England did not bowl particulary well in the first session but Croft and Tufnell exerted such pressure after lunch that it brought out New Zealand's talent for self-destruction.

Dominic Cork started with a horrid over, conceding 12 runs, but bowled Bryan Young with the first delivery of his second as the batsmen hit across a straight one. Blair Pocock had played himself in when he thrashed the ball straight to Atherton at short mid-on and it was 106 for three when Matthew Horne, on his debut, was caught by Graham Thorpe at slip off Darren Gough for 42.

Nathan Astle was brilliantly caught by Nasser Hussain at slip for 15 and it was 201 when Fleming, captaining the side in the absence of the injured Lee Germon, even though he had not previously led in a first-class match, was stumped as he went down the wicket to Croft.

Then the two bad boys of New Zealand cricket, Adam Parore and Chris Cairns, batted with improbable restraint to deny Croft and bring a thoughtful look to the wise features of John Ernest Emburey.

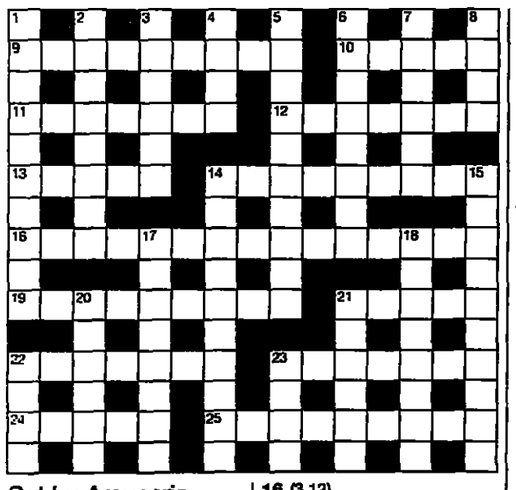
Paul Alliott, page 20

NEW ZEALAND
First Innings

B A Young b Cork	11
B A Pocock c Atherton b Croft	22
M J Horne c Thorpe b Gough	42
*S P Fleming st Stewart b Croft	62
N J Astle c Hussain b Croft	15
†A C Parore not out	38
C L Cairns not out	10
Extras (b1, lb13, nb15)	29
Total (for 5, 90 overs)	229

Fall of wickets: 14, 78, 106, 137, 201.
To bat: S B Doull, H T Davis, G I Allott, D L Vettori.
Bowling: Cork 15–3–67–1; Caddick 18–4–33–0; Gough 16–3–44–1; Croft 24–4–49–3; Tufnell 16–6–22–0; Thorpe 1–1–0–0.
ENGLAND: N V Knight, *M A Atherton, †A J Stewart, G P Thorpe, N Hussain, J P Crawley, R D B Croft, D G Cork, D Gough, A R Caddick, P C R Tufnell.
Umpires: R S Dunne and D B Hair.

Guardian COLLINS Prize Crossword No 20,888



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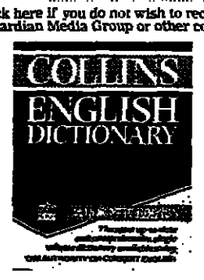

Set by Araucaria

Unclued and partially clued lights may be sung thus: All 10; 4-21 across boys; 13s; 7 makers; 3s at your 23 down; proud 21 downs; 22 downs (naturally allocated 2); 24 non-22 across (say 8-ers); bright 22 across; 16; the upwardly mobile 2; 14 across men — or vice versa

Across

9 No distinction and no big apple interrupting friendship (9)
10 (5)
11 Vibrating a metre, three times round (7)
12 Chanced to find Aries in Leo (3,4)
13 1 of 3 or 2 (in play 2 = 1) (5)
14 "Loot"'s been made into a film (9)
16 (3,12)
19 14 day month, perhaps, with a bit of luck, in a study group (4-5)
21 See 4
22 Two lovely black eyes (7)
23 Maybe Churchill ran off home from the sea, the beast! (7)
24 (5)
25 Blood backed by English common sense is sexy (9)

Down

1 History speaks of lots of shepherds (10)
2 Lift weight about (2,6)
3 (6)
4,21 across (4-5)
5 Only such a one could obey Tebbit: only 200 were free (5,5)
6 Female to do nothing inside or one to do everything (8)
7 (6)
8 Capablanca's king's in check (4)
14 Manage publicity for one in church (10)
15 Perversity is the condition of being abused (10)
17 Unction at cathedral should be multi-barrelled (3-5)
18 The American next 23 down misses her bingo (8)
20 Detective without his tea, say, or breakfast? (6)
21 (6)
22 (4)
23 Alternatively, to die on one's way through? (4)

FIRSTIMPRESSION
A A R O E A T I
LAPLANDER CLING
L I D E O K H H
ODDNESS UNDLEST
N I TOT U R O
HACKNEY ENTRAIN
A O C U N T
ROOFTOP STRETCH
D P W ERA E E
TREFOIL TAPROOT
I R S I A L W I
MEANT CONVIVIAL
E T E A I C N E
SWEEPINGCHANGES

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,887

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The theory of unnatural selection

David Lacey

FOOTBALL managers tend to be secretive about their team selections. It is, after all, the only esoteric knowledge they regularly possess and Glenn Hoddle was denied even this privilege once L T had phoned home.

Jimmy Scoular was a hard-tackling wing-half for Portsmouth, Newcastle United and Bradford Park Avenue who later managed Cardiff City. In 1968 Cardiff reached the semi-finals of the Cup Winners' Cup and played in Hamburg. As the kick-off approached Scoular, in one his black moods, still refused to divulge the team.

Then, as the coach containing players and press was pulling into the Volkspark Stadium, the manager tapped a reporter on the shoulder and handed him a scrap of paper on which he had written two lists of names. One of them, Scoular explained, was the team he had picked and we would recognise it when the players took the field.

In future Hoddle, who has broken with precedent by not announcing his teams until shortly before each match, might consider following Scoular's bizarre example to the extent of announcing two sides the previous day. At least the pundits would then have an even chance of getting it right, although this week most of us would have probably got it wrong.

It will not happen of course. Football managers are not that daft, not many of them anyway. But since, inevitably, the contrast between England's gauche attacks and the effortless superiority of Italy's defence has led to questions being asked about the real worth of the Premier League, is it not time the matter was put to the Scoular test?

Two teams representing the Premiership should meet at Wembley. Hoddle will pick the best England side he can and be permitted, if he wishes, to play Gascoigne and Ince even though they are with Scottish and Italian clubs. Ruud Gullit and Arsène Wenger, meanwhile, will select a foreign (non-British) Premiership team.

The crowd will know the true English league side when the players take the field — or will it? Scots, Welsh and Irish have been appearing for English teams since professional football began. The game played by England has never been fully commensurate with the game played in England and now, with the latest influx of foreigners, the balance is even less helpful for the national side's success.

What price Hoddle's strongest XI against the following foreign legion: Schmeichel; Johnsen, Albert, Stimac; Petrescu, Di Matteo, Cantona, Ginola; Bergkamp; Ravanelli, Zola. The bench could contain the likes of Bosnich, Bjornebye, Bilic, Asanovic, Juninho, Vieira, Vialli, Carbone and several more before you got to Milosevic.

There is a serious side to such idle thinking. Italy's previous victory over England at Wembley, 1–0 in a friendly in November 1973, marked the end of Bobby Moore's international career. On Wednesday Moore's position was filled, more or less, by Sol Campbell.

No disrespect to Tottenham's promising young defender is intended but such a thinness of choice is what England will increasingly be faced with if the clubs keep shopping overseas.

A similar exercise could be repeated in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal . . . any country, in fact, which regularly recruits from abroad. But most national teams would be able to match the quality of their imports.

AT Wembley on Wednesday England's vain attempts to penetrate Italy's defence recalled Manchester United's gallant but fruitless search for an equaliser against Juventus at Old Trafford in the Champions League. Juventus might have been inspired by two Frenchmen and a Croatian, but their defence was home-grown.

We keep hearing about the abundance of English talent that is about to burst on to the scene, there to be nourished and nurtured through a coaching system organised by Howard Wilkinson. Fine, but the way an apparently ordinary footballer like Ray Parlour has discovered, under Wenger, qualities that he himself did not know he possessed suggests that a foreign input at national coaching level might not come amiss.

Until those who run our game begin to think along these lines you had better hold that idea about Hoddle announcing two England teams.

New injury forces Becker closer to retirement

Richard Jago in Dubai

WILL Boris Becker be forced to quit tennis? Yesterday the game's most charismatic star was obliged to pull out of the Dubai Open, halted by a recurrence of the wrist injury which caused him to withdraw halfway through last year's Wimbledon.

That set-back kept Becker out for 3½ months. Another spell on the sidelines may make him wonder whether tennis, as he approaches the age of 30, is still the most important option in his life.

Becker's wrist has become progressively worse during the past five days. "Yesterday morning I said after my practice that it would take a miracle for me to play but it improved in the evening and I decided to try," he said. "Now it's become so much worse that I can barely open a bottle of water or shake hands."

Perhaps worse still, the wrist appears to have developed a compensatory injury. When he mistimed that fateful forehand at Wimbledon, Becker damaged the tendons at the back of the protruding bone. Now the pain has moved to the front of the bone.

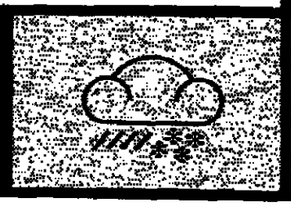
Becker will go home to Germany and consult the same doctors who helped him with the original problem. The likelihood is that further rest will be recommended.

Becker's predicament brought progress for Goran Ivanisevic. The top-seeded title holder will today meet in the semi-finals Jiri Novak, an unseeded 21-year-old Czech, who dismissed the Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek 6–2, 6–2.

The other semi-final will be between two former world No. 1s, Thomas Muster and Jim Courier.

Don't sit in a fog-bound airport.
Sit in a homeward-bound Eurostar.

Next time your plane home is delayed due to inclement winter weather, take a few minutes (after all, you're not short of them) to think about the Eurostar currently en route back to England. The one that wasn't delayed on take off, won't circle until it's safe to land and can't be redirected to Manchester. It's enough to give you a warm feeling inside. And when you're in a cold, fog-bound airport instead of your bed, that's no bad thing.



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